Elizabeth Beverly on Muriel Spark

COMMONWEAL

$2.00 May 21, 1993

E. J. DIONNE, Jr. on Michael Novak

KENNETH L. WOODWARD on Anna Quindlen

GERALD O'COLLINS on 'The Tablet's' Tom Burns

DON WYCLIFF on thinking about race

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH on Paul VI

ROBERT L. SPAETH on the ...an Library

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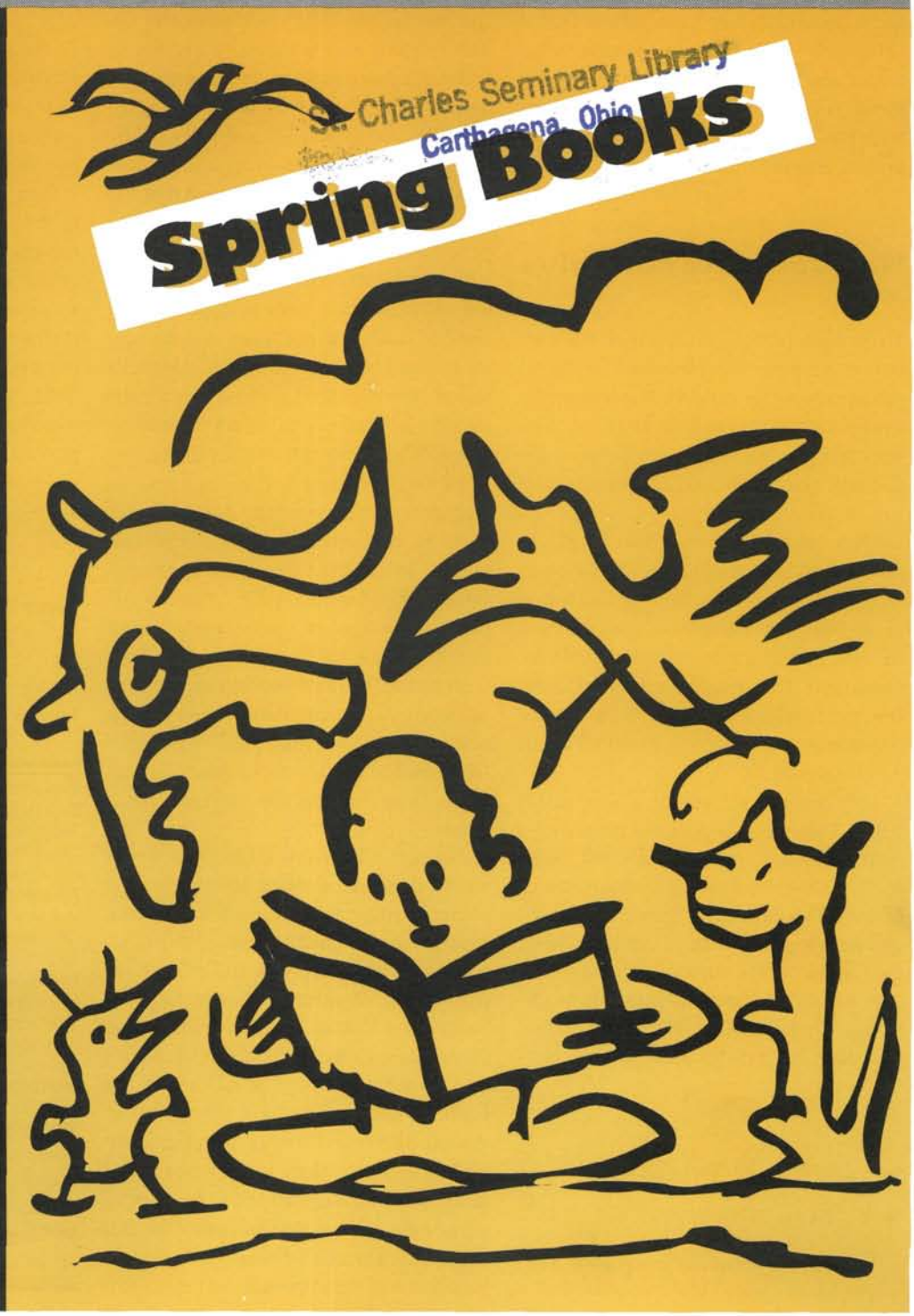

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CORRESPONDENCE

Life & letters

Brooklyn Heights, N.Y.

To the Editors: I am constantly delighted by the excellence of the literary articles in *Commonweal*. I keep a special file for them, to which has been added David O'Connell's essay "François Mauriac's 'Le cahier noir'" [April 23]. I read Mauriac's novels forty years ago. Now I'll read them with the greater understanding that age brings, plus the input of Mr. O'Connell.

JOAN AMBROSE COOPER

Why Catholics don't give

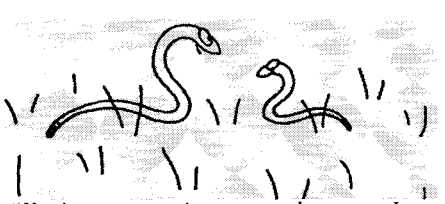
Aloha, Oreg.

To the Editors: Joseph Claude Harris's article ["Pennies for Heaven," April 9] prompts these reflections. A salesman for a religious goods store once asked us, "You want to know the difference between the Catholic church and the Lutheran church? Let me tell you a story.

"Not long ago, I had two sales appointments in a small town. The first was with the Lutheran pastor, who had asked me to bring him samples of altar cloths. I showed him a simple one which sold for about $50. He said, 'I think this will be fine, but first let me check with the finance committee at our meeting tonight. I'll call you tomorrow.'

"My next call was at the Catholic parish where I showed the pastor a picture of a gold tabernacle priced at $5,000. After looking it over and asking a few questions, he said, 'This looks great. Ship it.' And *that*," said the salesman, "is the difference between the Catholic and Lutheran churches."

Apocryphal or not, this little tale touches on a serious problem. We, as mainstream Catholics, have no problem with the clergy holding the keys to the kingdom, but we want to share the keys to the strongbox. We think most Catholics do, and we submit that one of the reasons Catholics give so meagerly is their perception that they have no real ownership of (and therefore no responsibility to) their church. Their Bishops are selected by a secretive process without input from or apparent regard for the people who will be most affected by the choice. Historically, many pastors have been assigned in the same way. Once installed, bishops (and pastors) have virtually total control over the expenditure of funds.



"You're a very poisonous snake, son....I expect you to always behave responsibly."

True, the "faithful" can protest, but only after the fact. canon law (canons 492 and 537) allows the ordinary and the pastor to appoint their own finance councils and makes no specific provision for the average lay Catholic to have a voice in the councils' makeup. Of course, many parishes (and perhaps some dioceses) do elect their own administrative councils, but there is no canonical requirement that they be so chosen. Other than the restrictions imposed in canon 1267, there is virtually no obligation for bishop or pastor to consult anyone before taking actions with direct financial bearing on the people who pay the bills. Almost every Catholic has at least one story to tell of financial mismanagement, fiscal chicanery, or economic disaster under the system as it now exists.

No one who lives in the real world would dare suggest that opening up the church's financial processes would be a panacea for our anemic stewardship practices. As Andrew Greeley and others have pointed out, disagreements with the hierarchy over doctrinal matters have also contributed to the current dilemma. But our own fundraising practices in the Catholic community have convinced us that our sisters and brothers in religion are no less generous than others when asked to support what they believe to be a worthwhile cause. In matters of both faith and finance, it seems that most Catholics no longer accept the imposition of taxes without representation, or of teaching which ignores the integrity of their own spiritual lives.

LARRY and MARY HANSEN

Carlin on gays: I

Fayetteville, N.C.

To the Editors: I would like to commend David R. Carlin, Jr. for braving the slings and arrows of the powerful politically correct and hitting the bull's eye ["Searching for the Soap," April 9].

As a thirty-year veteran of military service, I could add pages of reasons why homosexuals (no, they are not gays) should not be in our military, but the main one was simply stated by Mr. Carlin. Serving their country is not the point—legitimizing a perversion is.

Mr. Carlin: We know it's no easy task to go up against the cultural elite and their pervasive control of the printed and spoken word, but we traditional Americans appreciate your efforts.

NORVELL B. De ATKINE

Carlin on gays: II

Mt. Sidney, Va.

To the Editors: Not knowing whether to laugh or cry over David R. Carlin, Jr.'s

(Continued on page 29)

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COMMONWEAL

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Commonweal *welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.*

Alliance for regress

Making the enemy of my enemy my friend is an old political temptation—one that is not without its complications and drawbacks. Witness the relationship forged by the Archdiocese of New York with Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition. The archdiocese agreed to distribute the coalition's voter guide through New York parishes for a hotly contested local school board election. In our view, New York's commenting class gave the archdiocese a bum rap for doing so, but we also think a serious error in judgment was made, one that raises question about the degree of politically knowledgeable advice the archdiocese seeks or hears.

The Christian Coalition's voter guide was typical of the genre, asking and reporting the responses of school board candidates to eight questions. Three questions concerned the Rainbow Curriculum (*see* editorial, January 15, 1993) and HIV/AIDS education. The other five questions concerned basic education skills, parental inspection of instructional materials, school decentralization and funding, and voluntary school prayer.

The archdiocese's decision to distribute the guide clinched media opinion that the Catholic church is now solidly located on the religious Right—the certainty of the conclusion unfortunately being in inverse proportion to media familiarity with real live persons from the religious Right. On behalf of this conclusion many silly things were said during the campaign: That the guide violated separation of church and state. Ditto distribution of the guide in Catholic parishes. Ditto questions asked in the guide.

But what constitutional principle was violated? The Catholic church did not endorse any candidate, nor did the guide itself, nor, for that matter, did the Christian Coalition. Bulletin or pulpit announcements, where made, seemed simply to have encouraged people to vote. And for what it's worth: statements made in other churches, including remarks from the pulpit of Riverside Church by its pastor, the Reverend James Forbes, had they been uttered at Saint Patrick's Cathedral would have brought the wrath of First Amendment hawks and the press down upon the head of Cardinal John O'Connor.

But more must be said. The decision to distribute the coalition's guide, rather than provide a separate one, was made, according to a rather disingenuous explanation offered by the cardinal (*Catholic New York*, May 6, 1993), by his "good friend," Monsignor John G. Woolsey, head of the Family Life/Respect Life Office. The motive, we are told, was to save money. That limps.

All components factored in, the archdiocese made a large mistake. The Christian Coalition is organized under the auspices of Pat Robertson, who holds a distinct ideological position in one political party. He and his coalition have political links to groups and ideas that are at odds with much of Catholic social teaching and certainly with parts of its theology. What the archdiocese and the coaltion do have in com-

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mon is a conviction about abortion, HIV/AIDS education, and teaching about gays and lesbians in the public schools. There are many New Yorkers who think that sex is the sole focus of the Catholic church's social teaching. Working with the Christian Coalition simply confirms that misperception. The symbolism is false and counterproductive. The cardinal should understand that the public, including Catholics, will not believe that this alliance was forged merely to save printing costs.

The archdiocese would have done better to follow the practice of the Diocese of Brooklyn in trusting that Catholic lay people in their normal political coalitions would organize and support candidates able and willing to raise these questions. Such voices were heard in Brooklyn during the controversy over the Rainbow Curriculum and during the school board campaign; no Monsignor Woolsey was needed to make alliances. And no Brooklyn Catholic had to choose between voting for good candidates and against bad alliances.

AN EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

IS IT IDEOLOGY?

THE AGENDA OF REAL-LIFE GAYS

In my initial reading of David R. Carlin, Jr.'s April 9 column on gays in the military ["Searching for the Soap"], I felt he made a large leap when he listed the rising social acceptance of gays and lesbians—along with the prevalence of divorce, premarital sex, out-of-wedlock babies, absent fathers—as a significant cause of the decline of marriage and the family as institutions. A problem with that argument, as a couple of letter writers point out in this issue, is that it's not gays but straights that cause these other social evils. Since then I've come to see the link: For Carlin, acceptance of homosexual liaisons is like unto tolerance of the heterosexual aberrations he lists because it too undermines sexual norms that are needed to preserve and strengthen familyhood.

Well, yes, a little. *Some* of the people who don't object to the homosexual "life style" are people who have little respect for *any* of our inherited social and ethical norms, particularly those that have something to do with sex. Such people don't understand family as institution, think we all should do our own sexual thing ("as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else"), and rank intolerance, very broadly defined, as the worst of social and personal evils. I think that's what Carlin means by "the gay rights ideology" [Correspondence, May 7]. Others think of it as liberal individualism gone amok. Such an ideology exists; is present in but not confined to the gay rights movement; is false and dangerous.

But the situation is messier than Carlin portrays it. First, not all gay supporters of gay rights are apostles of normlessness. Second, not all opponents of gay rights are moved by high-minded concern for marriage and the family.

Some of the letters we've published, in this and previous issues [Correspondence, January 29; February 12 and 26; April 9; May 7] bear witness to the first point; their writers aren't pushing an ideological agenda that includes free-for-all sexuality and/or disdains family values. What the letter writers say confirms what I've already come to grasp. The gays and lesbians I know best are people who respect their families of origin and the family as institution, aren't themselves promiscuous but faithful, and would like their own unions regarded under the rubric of family; some would like to have, or do have, children under their care.

My personal experience, along with second-hand knowledge gained from books and the media, says that gays are as different from one another as straights, and are as likely (or as unlikely) as straights to be honest citizens, good workers, dutiful sons and daughters, brave and competent soldiers and sailors. The real-life gays of my acquaintance want gay rights, including social acceptance; but they are not anticommunitarian ideologues. In this they are like the homosexuals I saw interviewed during the April 25 march on Washington, who may have been carefully selected by sympathizers in the media, but who were nevertheless real and impressive people; in my judgment they represent the gay/lesbian mainstream.

On the second point: Beyond question, some opponents of gay rights have arrived at their convictions out of study and due reflection. But other opponents are bigots, people who enjoy hating and are pleased that gay-bashing has social acceptance in some circles. And still others are simply and more or less innocently biased (as who isn't, in one respect or another?). This kind of opposition—abundantly in evidence in anti-gay campaigns in Oregon and Colorado—is visceral. It images gays and lesbians as predatory, as attracted to any and all bodies similarly shaped. It thinks of homosexuality as a communicable disease. It sees homosexual lovemaking as perverted, a denial of nature and a defiance of God. But all these judgments, as I've argued earlier [February 26], are either disprovable or sufficiently debatable that they can't properly be used to justify discriminatory policy.

Carlin's argument fails, in short, because it doesn't evidence knowledge of "ordinary" homosexuals or their agenda, but—far more importantly—because it does not address the core issue. Acceptance of homosexuality is indeed like, say, tolerance of easy divorce in that it is a departure from an existing norm. But when serious people challenge a traditional standard of conduct—giving reasons for questioning its continuing legitimacy, contending that social enforcement of the norm impinges unfairly on their lives, arguing that revising the code will not harm but benefit society—simple reassertion of the norm's validity or its necessity is not an adequate rebuttal.

It's unfortunate that some of the antics of groups like Act-Up serve to deepen bias and provide ammunition to bigots. Showing contempt for the Eucharist just gives gay-bashers one more excuse. But does such behavior go with the homosexual territory? I think it's the predictable (which doesn't mean forgivable) consequence of pariahhood. Why (such rebels might argue) revere the icons of a society that views you with con-

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tempt and deprives you of the respect and opportunities that others hold as birthrights?

My besetting ideological temptation, I suspect, is not so much liberalism as utopianism—flavored, I hope, with not-so bland spices from the Sermon on the Mount. It leads me to believe that some day society (including the church) may come to regard homosexuality (including homosexual unions) as a significant difference but not as a curse or a crime or of itself sinful; and that many or most gays and lesbians, because they are human beings, are likely to respond to such acceptance by their own acceptance of social norms that are worthy and workable, including the God-given ideal of permanent, sacrificial, enfamilied love. But, as a utopian who once taught history, I know this outcome will take a while, and isn't guaranteed; witness the struggles for the rights of women, Jews, blacks, and Catholics.

ROBERT G. HOYT

REACTION TO WACO

ENFORCING THE LAW

CONSIDER THE BILL OF RIGHTS

Ever renowned for its delicacy in the face of human tragedy, and for its superb command of the wide array of theological convictions that stir the soul in American religious groups, the *Wall Street Journal* told us last month all that they think we need to know about the death of David Koresh and his followers in Waco, Texas. They were "nutty." That settles that. *Commonweal*'s May 7 editorial ("Agents of Apocalypse") took a more subtle approach, raising disturbing questions that cannot so lightly be brushed aside. These questions will have to be sorted out carefully by disinterested fact-finders before responsibility for this tragedy can be assessed more clearly. In the meantime, there are two other points that the *WSJ* overlooked. Like the First and the Second Amendment.

The First Amendment protects us from governmental interference with free exercise of religion. The religious freedom matter is subtle. I do not suggest that there is or ought to be an exemption from gun control laws grounded in the Free Exercise Clause or that religious adherents should have special license to amass an arsenal as they await the end of the world. Nor would any serious First Amendment scholar argue that the government must sit idly by if there is credible evidence that a religious community believes it has a duty to kill others and is likely to carry out that goal imminently.

That point has been made repeatedly in cases involving the Communist party and the Ku Klux Klan. When ideas get translated into illegal conduct, the government may, of course, take prompt and appropriate action both to prevent and to stop the conduct. But no one has yet adduced credible evidence that Koresh and his followers were likely to have come out of their compound with guns blazing against their fellow Texans. Until that is demonstrated, it seems plausible that the same standards that protect the Communist party and the Klan ought minimally to have governed in the case of the Branch Davidians.

Until the Native American peyote case in 1990, *Smith* v. *Employment Division*, the courts allowed religious freedom to be limited only where the state had borne a heavy burden of proof that the limitation was justified not by any ordinary public interest, but by a supreme public necessity, and that no less restrictive alternative to limitation exists. In *Smith* the Court relegated the less restrictive alternative standard to cases where the government intentionally singles out a religious group for hostile treatment. One could argue that this is precisely what occurred in Waco, but my point is a more general one. Government officials—and too many members of society—have grown out of the habit of thinking seriously about less restrictive alternatives to the way they enforce the law in general. So why bother in Waco, where the stakes—from the government's perspective—seemed so high?

Sober religious leaders like Dean Kelley, the counselor on religious liberty of the National Council of Churches of Christ, and James Dunn, the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, wrote to President Bill Clinton more than a month before the final denouement in Waco, urging him to "demilitarize the confrontation in Waco." "To invade a center of energy [like Mt. Carmel]," they wrote, "is like sticking a finger in a dynamo. Whether it explodes or implodes, the result will be tragic for all." It is sad that no one paid much heed to these voices. The views of the Branch Davidians about the end of the world may seem odd, not only to the *Wall Street Journal* but to the vast majority of us, but beliefs alone do not justify a government raid. The better part of prudence would have been to leave these folks alone, but that "less restrictive alternative" does not seem to have been a serious option. Maybe the Davidians were nuts, but their kind of nuttiness did not merit the end that came to them. Our government, after all, has no duty to protect us from nutty ideas, whether secular or religious. There's nothing wrong with the government taking a wait-and-see attitude about the end of the world.

Assume, moreover, that the *Wall Street Journal* correctly diagnosed Koresh and his followers as a bunch of nutty paranoids. That hardly justifies the intense, aggressive behavior of the AFT and FBI. It only lends credence to the worst fears and suspicions of the paranoids, and proves—from their perspective—that the world really is out to get them, but good.

And it does not explain why the FBI complied so closely with the script that Koresh and his followers were following. The difference, it seems, is that the folks inside Mt. Carmel were familiar with apocalyptic literature—indeed, they were obsessed with it—whereas the government agents were outside—in more ways than one—the faith community they had surrounded. The outsiders were truly innocent of the close parallel between the imagery in the Book of Revelation and their own astonishing sound effects, light deprivation, and military behavior that culminated in the consuming holocaust. To anyone inside the faith of the Davidians, who would not suspect

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that the end was indeed nigh? The most amazing news out of Waco is that none of the government agents apparently thought of "the fire next time."

Pity Attorney General Janet Reno and the FBI and the ATF for a moment. Why did leaving the Davidians alone not seem to be a real option for them? Presumably because the government's interest in law enforcement was—to use the First Amendment buzzword—truly "compelling." Koresh *et al.* had violated federal laws regulating access to automatic weapons. Which brings me to gun control. One commentator noted, I hope facetiously, that the Davidians had not violated any law of Texas of which he was aware. The Waco episode does not just give me pause about the least restrictive alternative standard that used to govern the First Amendment religion clause; it gives me big-time willies about the Second Amendment (relating the need for a militia to the right of the people to keep and bear arms).

The real problem is that Koresh is but the tiniest flake of powder (I mean snow, not gunpowder) at the tip of the iceberg of automatic weapons in this country. On any given Saturday, illegal transactions are openly carried on at gun shows at hundreds of locations throughout the country. The government poured over $100 million of taxpayers' money into the ATF raid and the FBI siege. I would have preferred that the scarce resources allocated to law enforcement on firearms be spent on regular interdiction of the massive violations of federal laws at the gun shows each weekend. That doesn't require another gun control law, even the sensible "Brady Bill," just somebody at the Treasury and Justice Departments with different priorities.

It will be hard to move past the simplistic fixation of blame (on the president, the attorney general, the federal agents, David Koresh, his followers, the media). But I hope that this tragic case serves not as a precedent for more paramilitary operations against the strongholds of the religious and secular crazies, but as the basis for tougher federal restriction on access to automatic weapons at the wholesale end.

EDWARD McGLYNN GAFFNEY, JR.

Edward McGlynn Gaffney, Jr., is the dean of the Valparaiso University School of Law.

CONDUCT UNBECOMING?

TOM DOOLEY'S MANY LIVES

NOBODY'S PLASTER SAINT

Randy Shilts's *Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the U.S. Military* (St. Martin's Press, $27.95, 784 pp.) is no ordinary book. Rushed into print to influence the raging debate over the status of gays in the military, its dust jacket proclaims, "Once in a generation comes a book that can change the world." The recent announcement that Shilts is suffering from AIDS only adds to the poignant urgency surrounding his message, that gays have served proudly and well in the U.S. military only to find themselves harassed, reviled, and persecuted simply for being themselves.

The best-known victim of military homophobia in *Conduct Unbecoming* is Thomas A. Dooley, the jungle doctor of Laos and folk hero to millions of American Catholics in the late 1950s. While Dooley's ordeal comprises but a small part of Shilts's vast exposé, the book is framed by Dooley's story for maximum dramatic effect. Shilts describes the U.S. Navy's frenzied investigation of Dooley's sexuality while Dooley was on the American lecture circuit in early 1956, promoting *Deliver Us from Evil*, the best-selling, highly embellished account of his role in the Navy's 1954 "Operation Passage to Freedom," which transplanted over 600,000 Catholics from North Vietnam to the new regime of Ngo Dinh Diem in the South. Fearing a scandal that would diminish its own prestige, the Navy hounded Dooley into confessing his homosexuality following a campaign of surveillance and perhaps entrapment by Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) operatives who bugged Dooley's phone and eavesdropped on his hotel room conversations.

Dooley's homosexuality has been no secret for years. It was first reported in an academic book I wrote in 1989 (*The Catholic Counterculture in America, 1933-1962*). At the time I felt it sufficient to describe the circumstances of Dooley's ouster from the Navy and indicate the role this forced resignation played in determining his future relationships with American personnel in Laos, where he went as a private citizen in 1956 to establish village clinics. Yet Dooley's career remains shrouded in mystery, and Shilts dramatically purports to expose the secret campaign that wrecked his life.

Shilts's first mistake in *Conduct Unbecoming* is an overreliance on the work of Diana Shaw, whom he misidentifies as a "biographer." Shaw, a researcher for the film industry, published an article on Dooley in the *Los Angeles Times Magazine* in December 1991 which was riddled with factual errors. (For example, she dismissed Dooley's "Vientiane clinic project" as a "sham"; while it is true he never worked in Vientiane, his village clinics were no sham.)

Shilts describes Shaw's heroic pursuit of the secret Navy file on Dooley: "from the first time Diana Shaw attempted to retrieve Dooley's official Navy records, it was clear that the service had something to hide." Actually, the ONI report is readily available to scholars who will simply pay a visit to the Naval Operational Archives in Washington and request the documents. In relying upon a single journalist's questionable work and a couple of interviews, Shilts has made a remarkable number of errors in his brief but central discussion of the Tom Dooley case, from calling Cardinal Francis Spellman "John" to elaborately setting Dooley's funeral Mass at Saint Patrick's Cathedral. (It actually occurred a thousand miles away in Saint Louis.)

When I first began researching Tom Dooley's life and works I was often annoyed by the embarrassingly saccharine hagiographies that pervaded the Catholic press during his lifetime and even in the years since his death from melanoma in 1961. I sought out more critical treatments of his career that would help establish his significance beyond the confines of

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the preconciliar Catholic subculture. Yet I discovered that works by bitter ex-Catholics and New Leftists that claimed to expose Dooley's links to the CIA, or that held him responsible for the Vietnam War, were only secular equivalents of the religious hagiographies: they contained little of value concerning the real Tom Dooley. Shilts's discussion is, in its way, as misleading and mistaken as the most garish Dooley tributes in *The Sign* or *St. Anthony Messenger* in 1958. Shilts's claim that "everything good and everything evil that he did can be traced back to the shame he carried over his homosexuality" reduces Dooley to the sum of his sexuality for polemical reasons and is no more justified than the ill-fated campaign for his canonization.

Dooley's story is extraordinary, maddeningly complex, as I have learned in the course of research for a biography I am currently writing. Having interviewed nearly two hundred of his friends and associates, I can attest that the contradictions in the man's character multiply exponentially even as we seek some definitive conclusions in his compelling, tragic journey to celebrity and sainthood. Shilts appears content to present a cardboard Dooley as gay martyr in order to promote his own important cause, but there is no evidence that Dooley would have been in any way interested in serving as a symbol of oppression.

Shilts writes: "The Catholic church had said he could not see the face of God because of his sin, so he struggled to be the best Catholic he could be, performing acts of kindness and obediently following the ideology of the church." In fact several of Dooley's gay friends insist he was convinced that God had made him homosexual and that, since he was considered highly attractive, his sexuality was offered as a gift to others. There are also those who assert that he was indeed tormented by his sexual orientation and that he dealt with it by acting as though he were another person during his often anonymous sexual encounters. Still another individual recalled making a sexual advance toward Dooley only to be told: "I'm in a state of grace, so I don't do that anymore." The point is simply that we have absolutely no documentary evidence of Dooley's own thoughts or feelings about his sexuality or the state of his soul. He was at once hugely egocentric and unintrospective, at least in the thousands of letters he wrote in haste from remote corners of Asia.

Dooley constantly sought to restore the faith of others in the church without revealing much of his personal situation, other than to state that he did not know how anyone could live without belief in God. He seemed aware that his own life was less important than the impact he might have on others because of his charisma and the powerful mystique of service generated by his work in Laos. Anyone hoping to understand Tom Dooley must first concede that we can only see him through the infinitely variegated perspectives of others. In this respect he is perhaps the first postmodern saint, continually shifting in his appearance as we seek to discover some deeper reality. I can understand why Randy Shilts needed to tell his limited version of Dooley's story, but I must also lament Dooley's continuing misuse by those less interested in understanding than enlisting him in personal crusades, however legitimate they may be.

Tom Dooley was nobody's martyr. He was an arrogant, supremely self-confident, and in many ways profoundly compelling individual who believed he was destined to perform a special errand in God's wilderness. He totally ignored Navy protocol and rarely did anything he did not want to do, perhaps, according to some of his gay friends, because he enjoyed the patronage of well-placed homosexuals in the Navy Medical Corps. One reading of the ONI report supports a theory that Dooley wanted out of the Navy and enjoyed enraging the top brass with his antics, since they had fallen for the largely fabricated version of recent history he presented in *Deliver Us from Evil* (one of their spies was more upset by Dooley's ignorance of Navy terminology than by his sexual behavior). Tom Dooley may not have been a saint, but he was no patsy either. He is much too interesting and his work too important to play a cameo role in a political melodrama he would probably have dismissed as unworthy of his cosmic grandeur. JAMES T. FISHER

James T. Fisher is an associate professor of American Studies at Yale University.

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

BETWEEN DRACULA & BOVARY

YUGOSLAVIA'S ROMANTIC NATIONALISM

As everyone now knows, there has been pressure on the Clinton administration to do something about the slaughter in former Yugoslavia. Elie Wiesel, at the dedication of the new Holocaust museum in Washington, used the occasion to plead with President Clinton for action. Normally dovish columnists (Anthony Lewis is chief among them) have called for military intervention. Jewish organizations, which normally—and appropriately—complain of facile comparisons of other atrocities to the Holocaust, have taken out newspaper ads suggesting that here a real comparison can be made. By the time this column appears some decision will almost certainly have been taken. In the event that the Owen-Vance plan is not followed by its signatories, the use of air strikes against strategic targets and lifting the arms embargo to allow Bosnians to receive weapons is likely to occur.

The use of military intervention would seem to be justified here, if anywhere. And yet General Colin Powell has opposed it on what may look to some like cold grounds, but are actually quite sensible: we can't just drop some bombs and, if that

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"We can't go on meeting like this!"

doesn't work, stop; and we should not assume that strategic air strikes and arming the Bosnians will do anything substantial to bring peace closer. Many military people, burned by Vietnam, argue that we must understand the probability of escalation, and there must be the clear understanding and commitment of the general public to what could become a full-scale military involvement.

Quite beyond this concern there is the added problem that we can be deceived by historical comparisons, even apparently justifiable ones. It is a mistake to say that the Holocaust was so unique that any comparison, ever, with any other event is always inappropriate. But it is also a mistake to say that because a comparison can legitimately be made, we can therefore make the comparison across the board: if ethnic cleansing reminds us, as it should, of Nazi genocide, therefore any hesitancy on the part of the European or U. S. governments can be compared to Neville Chamberlain, and any firm resistance can be compared to Churchill, etc. Similarly, the comparison to Vietnam fails: it may be that a limited intervention will lead to an escalation of involvement; but what we might end up fighting here is very different, and it can be argued that a long involvement is not, simply because long, therefore unthinkable. What we can't hope for here, after any sort of involvement or no involvement at all, is a simple peace.

This is much more like the chaos that led to World War I than it is like anything that has occurred since, with some added and more modern complications.

Many commentators speak of the ancient hatreds and entrenched national loyalties, the long sense of grievance, that have marked the Balkans. Yet it was possible for Serbs and Croats and Bosnian Muslims to live together for years, with many of these allegedly deep-seated feelings very much on the back burner. The nationalist card was played first by the Serbs and then by the Croats, and nationalist feeling was tapped to strengthen specific political agendas.

But this nationalist magma needs to be understood. Nationalism as we know it is not an ancient memory, thinly layered over by modernism. Nationalism is a product of romanticism, born in the nineteenth century, and was predicated on the notion that each specific language group or culture deserved its own specific nation-state. It was a reaction to empires—especially the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires—and was complicated by the Wilsonian endorsement of the right to national self-determination. In the Balkans, where one culture often lives in the pocket of another, this was and is a recipe for horror. There are Hungarians in Romania, Albanians in Macedonia and Romania, Serbs in Albanian territory, Croatians and Bosnian Muslims in Serbian territory, Albanians in Serbian territory, and so forth. The identification of a society with the state is a modern invention. The identification of a nation (that is, a language-group and culture) with the larger society itself is also relatively modern. It has been possible in some parts of the world for widely divergent religions and cultures to live side by side with relatively little friction; the friction between them (occurring now in India between Muslims and Hindus) is not necessarily a resurgence of some ancient, atavistic feeling. It is in some ways the exploitation of a relatively modern phenomenon, the romantic identification of culture and language with the bogus need for a nation-state or for particular forms of political enfranchisement. It may be hard for us now to understand that it was not always this way, but it was not.

Where one important comparison with genocide of the Nazis fails is that the Nazis were in charge, as Stalin was during the murder of the kulaks. It is not at all clear that the government of Serbia can control what it has unleashed, nor can the Croats, nor can the Bosnians. This is a region where the state has been weakened to the point of near-total atrophy. Nationalism was originally invoked to strengthen the politics of the nation-state, but is an unmoored passion that has devoured any real politics, replacing it with romantic longing, self-pity, anger, self-justifying hatred, and a built-in incapacity for resolution and fulfillment. The best argument for intervention is to keep this horror from spilling over into Kosovo and Macedonia; this would bring in Albania, and then, perhaps, Turkey and Greece. But it is not clear that the horror can be contained by political, or military, means.

A long time ago it occurred to me that romanticism is the emotional continuum that extends between *Dracula* and *Madame Bovary*. What is going on in former Yugoslavia is closer to the Dracula end of that spectrum. Americans hate the thought that some problems have no solution, but this is one. The interviews that tell of people who were friends, neighbors, and fellow workers who have now become their rapists and torturers make you wonder not how long it will take for healing to come, but whether it is possible at all. You thought Northern Ireland and Israel were a problem. Welcome to hell. □

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CAPITALISM WITH SOUL?

NOVAK ON THE CATHOLIC ETHIC

E.J. DIONNE, JR.

Pope John Paul II's *Centesimus annus* has to rank as one of the most successful papal documents in history. The highest compliment to the pope's 1991 social encyclical lay not in the fact that so many were eager to say they agreed with the pope, but that partisans of so many different viewpoints in the church insisted that the pope had agreed with *them*.

Such consensus is often reached with fuzzy language, artful compromises, and a high level of generality. But that was not true with *Centesimus annus*. The pope was highly specific about the principles Catholics should embrace in judging economic systems.

He was also clear in stating where various systems—socialist, capitalist, welfare state—failed to live up to sensible Christian criteria. But John Paul wisely chose *not* to build a political and economic system from top to bottom and declare his creation the one and only Catholic way. The pope's principles rule out certain approaches (including dictatorships, highly centralized command economies, capitalism without social safety nets and safeguards) while leaving open a broad area for debate and experimentation . The pope's approach is principled, but not ideological; broadly egalitarian without being a demand for absolute equality; open to the advantages of markets and the positive uses of government.

Michael Novak would, I think, agree with this account. The pope's encyclical, he writes, "gives encouragement to social democrats and the moderate Left, *as well as* to persons who share my own proclivities, *and* to those further to my right. It is not a party document." (The emphasis here, and in all subsequent quotations, is Novak's.) An enthusiast for capitalism, Novak nonetheless goes out of his way to make clear that his claims are limited. "No democratic capitalist regime should pretend to be the Kingdom of God," he writes at one point. "The market principle is a good one," he writes at another, but then adds: "It is not an idol."

Yet for all of Novak's welcomed caution, he has a particular case to make: That the pope's encyclical marked a major shift in Catholic social thought because it offered not only a negative definition of capitalism (which was common enough in the history of Catholic social thought) but also a positive one, a rarity in papal documents. John Paul, he argues, not only understands the efficiencies bred by market economics, but also the important role markets play in rewarding creativity and invention. Novak sees this as a large advance over traditional Catholic efforts to find "a third way" between capitalism and socialism. What we can see now, he says, is that "the threefold *combination* of democracy, capitalism, and religious liberty *is* the 'middle way.'"

The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,
Michael Novak. Free Press, $24.95, 334 pp.

This is the underlying theme of *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Novak draws his title from Max Weber's book about the Protestant ethic and begins with an argument that Weber defined the spirit of capitalism too narrowly and attributed to Calvinism certain attitudes that were in fact more broadly shared among many varieties of Christians and Jews. But Novak's argument with Weber is secondary to his broader goal of offering a history of Catholic attitudes toward capi-

"Nothing personal, Pooh, but we figured you'd fetch a fortune on the open market."

E.J. DIONNE, JR., *author of* Why Americans Hate Politics, *writes about politics for the* Washington Post.

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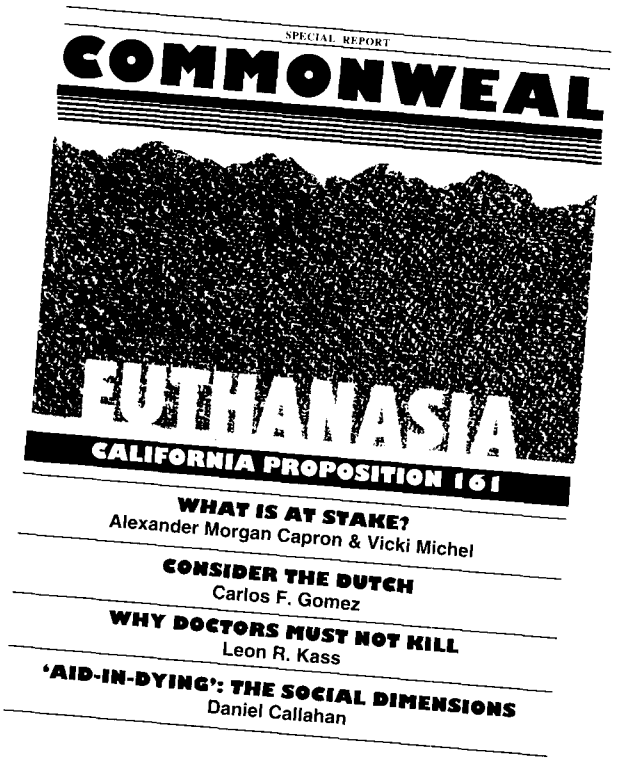

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talism—interspersed with a few too many citations from free-market thinkers such as Hayek and von Mises—and a celebration of where the church has come out.

After years in the polemical trenches, the Novak who emerges here is seeking a friendlier and more civil debate. Among the virtues he lists at one point as being essential to a free society, one is "the art of speaking kindly, even of those one opposes, in order to protect possibilities of future practical cooperation." Novak sometimes falls short of this difficult ideal, notably in his chapter "Against the Adversary Culture," but he mostly stays true to the spirit he ascribes to *Centesimus annus*. As a result, those who have disagreed with Novak in recent years will find many things to like here.

One hopes especially that Novak's conservative allies will read him, because they would do well to emulate his communitarian spirit and his repeated emphasis on the need to lift up the poor. In his political pilgrimage to the Right, Novak has emerged as a humane Jack Kemp-style conservative; he's not a hard-shelled rightwinger. And many of the things Novak says about the importance of civil society and the institutions of church and family reflect a consensus that is taking hold across the political spectrum. Novak is entirely right when he writes: "The *best thing* government can do, in a positive way, is to catalyze the efforts of civil society, so that the citizenry at large will bring its many diverse talents and resources to the assistance of the needy."

Still, Novak can't resist scoring points that are not entirely fair. He argues, for example, that "the first response of the American Catholic Left to *Centesimus annus* was shocked silence, followed less by an exposition of its theme than by an attack on 'neoconservatives' for 'hijacking' the encyclical." I don't remember any "shocked silence." True, a handful of particularly dogmatic critics of capitalism may have been unhappy with the very parts of the document Novak likes most. And some on the Catholic Left were more enthusiastic about the pope's earlier formulations on social questions (especially *Laborem exercens* and *Sollicitudo rei socialis*). But most progressives accepted the central themes of *Centesimus annus* summarized well in this magazine by J. Bryan Hehir. Father Hehir wrote that the pope's assessment "takes the market reality seriously and acknowledges values in it that John Paul's predecessors may have assumed but did not assert." At the same time, Hehir added, the pope saw moral limits on the market, notably that "many human needs are not met by the workings of the market," that "there are whole groups of people without the resources to enter the market," and that "there are goods that 'cannot and must not be bought and sold.'" That strikes me as a pretty fair reading. In the meantime, some conservatives were quite uncomfortable with many of the things the pope said. One contributor to a *National Review* symposium on the encyclical saw parts of it as "endorsing socialism in its currently fashionable form of corporatism." Milton Friedman saw "much for left-liberals" in the document. Similar things were said about the American bishops' economic pastoral, which was far less well-received by neoconservatives who liked the pope's view so much.

While many of Novak's arguments will be familiar to read-

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ers of his earlier work, he does offer an interesting innovation, proposing to redefine "social justice" as a personal virtue. Novak sees the concept as existing in a "conceptual fog." Citing Hayek, he argues that "social justice has become the chief battle cry of those who would expand the role of government, particularly in questions of redistribution."

Well, yes. In fact, a libertarian like Hayek doesn't like the notion of social justice because he rejects on principle the idea that one should worry about social, as against individual, outcomes. Those who question a libertarian view would assert that social justice is relevant precisely because market outcomes do not automatically produce a just society. Within many large corporations, executive salaries—and pensions and "golden parachutes"—are usually determined by internal political factors; they bear almost no relationship to a company's market performance. This raises questions of "social justice," and so, too, does the plight of a steel worker who has devoted himself loyally to his firm for a quarter century and suddenly finds himself unemployed because of shifts in the world market for steel.

The difficulty with Novak's view of capitalism is that it tends to sweep from view questions about the inequitable distributions of power that unchecked capitalism can produce and downplays the enormous dislocations that capitalism—especially in its new global form—can create. Capitalism can be highly disruptive of the ties of "family, work, and neighborhood" that conservatives speak about so much. Thus, although social justice is bound to be a highly contested concept, it is also a highly useful standard by which to measure social systems.

On the other hand, Novak's desire to define "social justice" as a virtue applying to individuals is appealing as a supplement to older definitions. "The practice of social justice means activism," he writes, "it means organizing; it means trying to make the system better." The notion that Christians have a *personal* obligation to expand what political scientist Robert Putnam has referred to as the pool of "social capital" makes good sense.

At the end of this book, I was left with two large questions about the thrust of Novak's argument, one related to politics, the other concerning the relationship between religious faith and political commitments.

Ever since he published *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* in 1982, Novak has been urging us to embrace what he calls "a tripartite system" involving a market economy, a democratic polity, and a "moral cultural system" that would nourish the "virtues and values" on which free economies and societies depend. At a certain level, most who call themselves progressives, liberals, or social democrats broadly accept some version of this system. Progressives obviously have no problems with democracy. Few are suggesting that the market can or should be eliminated. And most want a "moral cultural system" as independent as possible from state and market.

The difficulties arise over the interaction among these three systems. The largest difference lies in what the relationship should be between democracy and the market. Novak is not a pure libertarian; he accepts the need for social safety nets organized

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ETHICS AND PUBLIC POLICY CENTER

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both by the state and by private institutions. But he would severely circumscribe the state's economic role. Novak sees the hostility to capitalism among intellectuals as related to what he calls "the aristocratic biases of modern intellectual life." As a result, he says, intellectuals "overlooked the self-reforming capacities of capitalism when the latter is embedded in powerful democratic and moral-religious traditions."

There is another way of looking at this. Far from being friends of aristocracy, many of the critics of pure capitalism are actually democrats who believe the market works best—and on behalf of the largest number of citizens—when it is constrained and improved by the workings of democratic government. The "self-reforming" capacities of democratic capitalism are in large part due to the first word, democratic. Most of the social reforms in the capitalist countries were the product of New Dealish and social democratic movements.

Even on the level of economic performance, substantial government intervention has often been needed to keep the free market from running off the rails. In the global economy which is producing substantial job shifts from high-wage to low-wage countries, energetic government will be required to ease the transitions of millions of workers and to underwrite job training. With large cuts in the Department of Defense's research and development budgets, which had substantial spinoff benefits to the private economy, other government agencies may have to step into the research area. One could multiply these examples, but the point is clear enough: capitalism has often been saved by its democratic critics.

This raises the broader question of how one defines the Christian's proper attitude toward any political or economic system. Novak, as we have seen, is not trying to deify capitalism. But many Christians who find themselves with doubts about Novak's enthusiasm for capitalism are acting not out of a blindness to its benefits, but from a view that Christians have a particular obligation to be critical of the failures, imperfections, and injustices in "this world." This critical posture means that the Christian's vocation is to live in dynamic tension with whatever system or society he or she happens to participate in—to be, in John Paul's famous phrase, "a sign of contradiction."

Novak would agree with this analysis in principle, but argue that many on the Catholic Left take the "prophetic stance" in the wrong direction and are too eager to dismiss the moral and practical advantages of the market and (if they are Americans) the achievements of their country. If Novak wants to criticize self-righteousness and reflexive anti-Americanism on the Left, he'll get no argument from me. And I'll also grant him that the Left has been insufficiently mindful of the ways in which capitalism can encourage creativity and enterprise. But many of capitalism's critics, even some of the self-righteous ones, were responsible for the very process of self-correction that Novak celebrates. To the extent that Christianity nurtures that critical spirit and encourages impatience with injustice, it is doing just what it is supposed to do. That may make us less appreciative of the market system than Novak thinks we ought to be, but my suspicion is—to put it in the market's terms—that the benefits of this stance far outweigh the costs. □

Dixie Partridge

Unnatural Laws

Arriving Late with My Father, 77: the Northwest Coastline

What's time but a trick?
Present distilled to past
as our headlight beams hit the sea rock,
dissolve out over the black edge
of the sea. Who can say
where the light stops being light,

how the bulb turned off
seems not to let that last light escape,
but draws it quickly back—
like a jump-start needed
so the future will work.

Near a spot you brought me
forty years before, we hoard words,
reworking pasts to make them fit
this night and who we've become,
to explain, say, why you sicken
at the smell of geraniums,
how I'll always hate oatmeal
and being made late.

And reinvented pasts become just as true,
helping us carry what we can't shed:
that my black-eyed rebellious daughter is like me;
you've become your grandfather;
how we learn to close around our pain
like night leaves of prayer plants.

Once time was simple as compass points—
I saw north as the way everyone traveled
to the future. But the equator travels on
forever, never reaching south or north,
magnetic poles working on the seas,
black rock and tides so unfamiliar in their change
we don't see.

Those child-years
before we know about time
we are different—inventing only the present,
and it sings.
Now with all our storied pasts
we know the future as mute,
signing us into that place
where time changes to a circle-sea,
and trawling a little too far south
we wonder *who were we really*,
true north lost to the stone-eyed stars.

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Muriel Spark: A selective silence

CURRICULUM VITAE
Autobiography
Muriel Spark
Houghton Mifflin, Co., $22.95, 213 pp.

Elizabeth Beverly

As I was reading the first two chapters of Muriel Spark's extraordinary life story, *Curriculum Vitae*, I felt gleeful. I was having great, earnest fun inside another person's life. There I was in Edinburgh, happily guided by little Muriel, smelling "warm, round, bappy rolls with a powdering of flour," waiting with her for the doorbell to ring to see who might visit, and listening raptly as she spun out wonderful sentences like the one about the doorbell: "That ring at the door that I loved so much would bring, in the afternoon, my mother's friends or, on rare occasions, my married aunts." How many writers allow the sentence itself to imitate so effortlessly its own emotional content? First I hear the ring; then I wait to discover who's literally on the other side of the door. And those "married aunts," held at bay by word after word after word, not to mention four commas, become both rare and precious by the time they finally reach me.

Such easy yet artful authority when delivering one's richly remembered childhood suggests that glee and curiosity, anticipation and the sting of disappointment are serious human matters. Gifted writers who can locate the happiness in their youth allow the simplest things: bread, butter, desks, bicycles, to assume a significance that touches everyone. The first chapters of this volume place Spark, whose extended childhood was set in Scotland in the 1920s and '30s, in the company of writers like Vladimir Nabokov, Eudora Welty, Laye Camara, and Wole Soyinka who insist that it is the experience of the individual child which must be honored. Their insistence is not based on a sentimental evocation of time past, but rather resides in the gradual exposure of the reader to the particular texture and whirr of the stuff that filled the writer's childhood, as if time means nothing.

Muriel Spark sits well in such company because she is a fiction writer who has acquired justifiable international renown while, at the same time, enlarging the scope of the genre, as well as the possibilities of the written language. With nineteen novels, two collections of poetry, five of short stories, one drama, three volumes of criticism, and one book for children to her credit (and here I refer only to book-length works), the art of

writing has shaped Muriel Spark's entire life.

This volume, covering the first thirty-nine years of that life, is not simply a colorful reminiscence, nor even the tale of a writer's growth over time. Spark had another intention when she undertook this work: "So many strange and erroneous accounts of parts of my life have been written since I became well known, that I felt it time to put the record straight." This adult goal occupies the latter half of the book in which she straightens the record mostly in a tone of breezy rectitude, while, at times, permitting the reader to hear a sharp rasp of outrage over past injustices. For example, she recounts in detail her serious grievance as the editor of The Poetry Society in London from 1947-49. The American reading public will probably take this account as an example of exotic British behavior: to feel still so upset over such a short tenure in a then-minor institution! Yet Spark's devotion to detailed honesty renders this account poignant, at the very least.

Of greater interest to Americans should be the generosity with which Spark encourages readers to link the particular circumstances or events in her life with those stories or books which subsequently embodied them. Spark's generosity is both graceful and casual, as she points again and again to the generative quality of a particular incident—seeing Victoria Falls for the first time, for instance—and its ultimate expression in a story that a reader can find in the library—in this case "The Seraph and the Zambesi." And most fans will be delighted to discover the prototype of Miss Jean Brodie in the figure of an actual teacher, Miss Christina Kay, who once commented, "I would like to see a grey coat and skirt for the spring, girls, worn with a citron beret. Citron means

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When the spark is gone

Something there is that doesn't love Muriel Spark—and that something appears to be the film industry, including its television branch. This observation is prompted by the recent "Masterpiece Theatre" presentation of *Memento Mori*. Although my thematic dyspepsia applies as well to other attempts to film Spark novels—*The Driver's Seat, The Abbess of Crewe*, and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*—I will restrict my critique to "Momento Mori."

In a sense, the recent two-part "Masterpiece" version of *Memento Mori* offered abundant delights. No country contains so many superb actors as does England, including those actors capable of portraying aged cranks and assorted other Dickensian caricatures, all imported more or less faithfully from Spark's novel. This novel has no single protagonist, but it does offer several prominent attitudes and a pronounced invitation to sort these out and to see what rides on their differences. The book is hilariously, dead-seriously, and intriguingly about how a number of characters—all over seventy—react to their own telephone message: "Remember you must die." Readers are asked to see that some persons succeed in forcing themselves to forget that the telephone bell ever tolled for them. Other listeners hear the words as the threat of a murder and hasten to get Scotland Yard to trace the call. A third kind of listener responds that he's too busy listening to life's interests to waste any time and energy thinking on death. Another reaction is to acknowledge the words (rather than the caller) and in fact set one's house and one's self in order. A final response is the Christian one—to accede to the reminder and remember that Death is but first among the so-called Four Last Things, the others being Judgment, Hell, and Heaven.

Spark's narrative strategy does justice to these various credibly human reactions. At the same time, the book emphasizes, in the epigraphs, in numbers of pages allotted to particular responses, and in placement of occasions, the secular calmness of Inspector Mortimer, who takes the call as a fortunate reminder of the importance of death to the relishing of this life as well as the Christian reactions of Charmian Colston and Jean Taylor, both of them Catholic converts. Taylor in fact comes closest to being a main character, and the narrator's last words emphasize Taylor's belief. In short, the book is about a range of reactions. It relishes this human diversity and sympathizes with it, pitying the fear-ridden ones and pushing those of Mortimer and Taylor. We die of this or that medically specifiable problem, indeed; but we die as well of our lives. We are what we eat.

The film virtually disregards the book. Obviously the decision was made to play up codgerly eccentricity and the Holmesian brand of mystery supposedly behind the telephone calls. This plan in turn required the playing down of Jean Taylor's role and the removal from the film of Alec Warner, the gerontologist who had briefly been Jean's lover and who remains both loyal to her and staunchly skeptical of everything beyond the social scientist's raw data. Jean's ideological squabbles with Alec, past and present, focus the materialistic-religious groundwork and thereby direct us to the different kind of mystery that is the point of this novel. By leaving Taylor in such a modest cubbyhole of the plot, by padding the minor role of caretaker and giving it to Maggie Smith, and by dropping virtually everything of spiritual import imposed narratively, the film settles for whimsy, for the sadness and pathos of fear and decline, and in the end for a thoroughly impossible cozy reunion for Charmian and Taylor—to absolutely no purpose, presumably, save to suggest how nice it would be for two old ladies to make up before the reaper calls. Nor is it gratuitous to note that Alistair Cooke, now retired from "Masterpiece Theatre," nearly absented himself from these doings. He had almost assuredly not read or not understood the novel, and had difficulty smiling patronizingly (for two weeks) over what he saw as this grand cast of oldsters engaged in a mysterious tale invented by a young Muriel Spark who, in these her later years, would very likely think otherwise of old age. In fact, almost thirty-five years and sixteen novels later, Muriel Spark has continued to display the same satirical insight and capacity for empathy evident in *Memento Mori* (1959). The real point, however, is that the producers and Cooke missed the point of *this* work. In short, the film failed the novel, and Cooke failed both.

My point is not, of course, that films can never be novels, or that deviation is intolerable. Rather, I think that directors should feel a serious commitment to novels as original scenarios, and should strive for the *spirit* of a given text: the rubric "based on" ought to carry weight. Spark's novels. heavily dependent as they are upon narrative authority for their philosophical and theological grounding, may simply be unfilmable on their own moral and aesthetic terms—unlike, for example, "Brideshead Revisited," a film that used voice-over and a realistic format to render Waugh's religious novel beautifully. But whether Spark's books are suited to the cinema or not, most of the attempts have proved disappointing—and none more so than Masterpiece Theatre's "Memento Mori." Cinema and television, especially the Public Broadcasting System, have adapted many novels to the screen. I think offhand of books by James, Dickens, Hardy, and Trollope; of thrillers, crime stories, and historical romances. Do producers miss Spark's theological foundation? Or do they simply regard it as death for ratings?

JOSEPH HYNES

Joseph Hynes teaches modern literature at the University of Oregon. His study, The Art of the Real: Muriel Spark's Novels, *was published in 1988.*

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lemon, it is yellow with a sixteenth or so of blue."

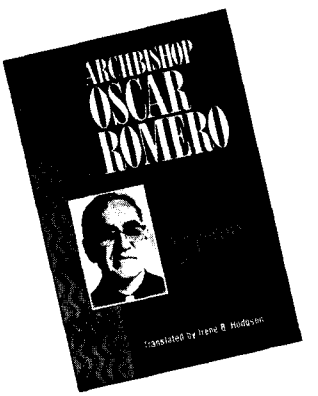
Spark both reveres and practices accuracy, but accurate sharing of information or remembered speech does not constitute openness. Another intention for this volume, stated in the introduction, is ambitious by anyone's measure: "I resolved...to write an autobiography which would help to explain, to myself and others: Who am I." If Muriel Spark were meant to be a character with passions and rages and motives and felt needs, and this book were the novel that sought to bring her to life, I'd have to conclude that the author had never permitted her character to live fully on the page. I would wonder who this Muriel Spark was meant to be. Oh yes, the sure, clear voice would race me through the chapters full of hardship (a "disastrous marriage" in Africa to a disturbed and violent man), separation (a motherhood spent apart from her own son), adventure (a stint with British Intelligence during World War II)—this list could go on—but, in vain, I would search for the person who had endured and thrived.

At times I catch a glimpse of her, when, for instance, she launches her chapter on her African marriage with a stoic ode to the conscious repression of "personal sorrows, frights, and horrors." I catch it again when she is being cruelly but truly humorous as she refers to one of her arch-enemies in the Poetry Society, Dr. Marie Stopes. And yet again when she acknowledges her conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1954 with a refusal to discuss the role of her faith in her life or work.

I realize I run the risk of wanting too much from an already atypically generous writer, but I find Spark's concerted effort to keep her own heart off the pages of her autobiography and my response to that effort both problematic and instructive. I turn once again to her childhood. It seems miraculous and fabulous that she takes me by the hand and leads me to bakeries and dairies and her school, but never for a moment does it occur to me to feel slighted because she doesn't share her button collection. I don't feel bereft of an account of her father's whiskers. Or her first kiss. When she writes of her childhood I am simply thankful that she remembers anything at all. I understand that a child's heart is revealed through enthusiasms and fears, and always through those material things which he or she loves.

As soon as Spark turns to adult life, even without her suggestion that this autobiography might reveal who she is, I embrace a different way of listening. I spontaneously suspect that a selective silence reveals a multitude of qualities: stoicism, reticence, mistrust, even arrogance, and that I have the right to seek her life both in her silence and in her speech. If this standard of mine seems impossibly high, it also feels completely natural, and concerns the arduous responsibility of adulthood. As in the "doorbell" sentence, Spark's art has an uncanny manner of imitating life, for by the time I am pacing through the adult Spark's days with her, I too am nostalgic for her childhood and its lushness, I too want that time when being both ardently loved and supportively liberated from the constraints of love felt natural. Of course, I miss chapter 2 when I'm stranded in chapter 6. She does too. If this were a novel I could say that the second half simply doesn't live up to the dazzling promise of the first. But this is no novel; it's a life.

If in the adult half of this book, there is no effusive and emboldening love story to reveal Spark's heart, it is not for lack of love. Despite the mention of many friends, Spark's silent eloquence suggests that, after parents and son, her main loves are God and work. As for God, Spark will not speak of that dimension of belief, and the other great discipline, her art, lies outside these pages, on the shelves of bookstores and public libraries in book after book after book. To find the adult Muriel Spark, the one who at once dashes through and jots down the early pages of this volume, spouting verse and giggling with her brother, one must simply go to those other shelves. This predicament poses no problem; rather it presents a tantalizing invitation. Muriel Spark would approve. □



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Translation by Irene B. Hodgson
Foreword by Thomas E. Quigley
Introduction by James R. Brockman, S.J.

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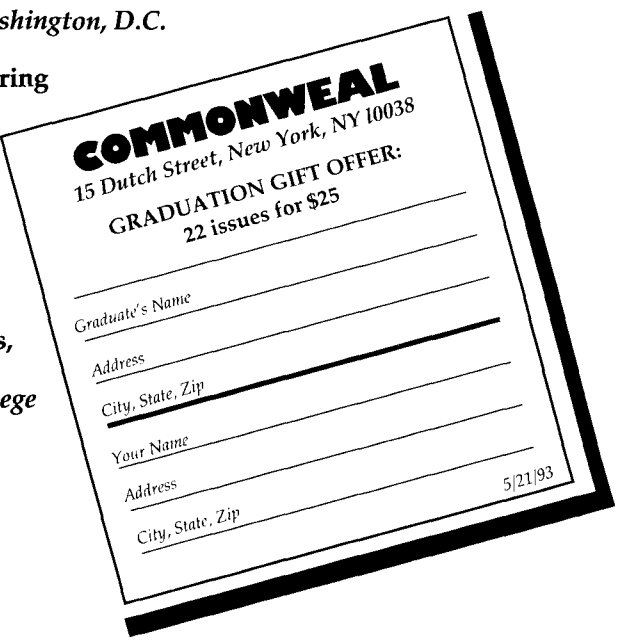

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A VISIT TO QUINDLENLAND

THINKING OUT LOUD
On the Personal, the Political, the Public, and the Private
Anna Quindlen
Random House, $22, 283 pp.

Kenneth L. Woodward

The eighty-seven pieces collected here are culled from Anna Quindlen's op-ed columns in the *New York Times*, written between 1990 and 1992, and for which she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for commentary last year. To these she has added not only an introduction about herself and her approach to column writing, but also prefaces to each of the book's four sections explaining what she's up to—in case, I suppose, we just don't get it.

In her introduction, Quindlen reflects on her life and good fortune as a journalist. She is up-front about why she thinks she was hired, at the age of twenty-four, by the *Times*. It was, she says, "because I was a woman." She took her subsequent responsibilities as a columnist (first in the "Home" section) as mandate to practice her singular form of genderized journalism. She thinks the media substitutes for long-vanished "back fences." But back fences were for gossip. The media is what we have because we no longer have public squares, or even cafes, places where citizens would meet to discuss issues of civic concern in a civilized manner. They were, withal, masculine venues of intellectual interchange. That's what Quindlen labors to overcome.

What makes her different from rival columnists, Quindlen says, is her "process" of thinking. Hence the title of this collection. "From the beginning," she writes, "it seemed to me that the point [of her op-ed column, "Public and Private"] was not to make readers think like me." That, she suggests, is what male columnists want—readers who will be persuaded by rational argument to accept their conclusions. Rather, "It was to make them think."

But to think with "feeling." The "standard operating procedure has been to bring the mind but not the heart to the table of public discourse," she asserts. Apparently Quindlen is unaware of fellow *Times*man, Anthony Lewis, who keeps a limp rein on his emotions, and she seems never to have slogged through the lachrymose outpourings of fellow Irishmen Jimmy Breslin and Pete Hamill. But a columnist has to be distinctive to survive and Quindlen does own a unique voice. She is, as her new collection amply demonstrates, journalism's preeminent practitioner of emotional correctness. She may not want us to think like her—but we damn well better learn to *feel* like her.

One of her favorite techniques is to sketch a scene or fix an image that prejudices the heart and clouds the mind. Here, for example, is a paragraph from "Erin Go Brawl," a column about the refusal of the Ancient Order of Hibernians to permit gay and lesbian groups to promote their cause by marching in New York's Saint Patrick's Day Parade. Quindlen is all for inclusiveness, of course, but as always she argues *from*, not *to*, her conclusion:

"Some characteristics of the Irish I know and love have always seemed to me contradictory. Hail fellows well met, without being met at all. The unknowable extroverts. It is no accident that some have taken to professions that give the illusion of being among the people while remaining essentially separate. Newspapermen, who are of events but outside them. Politicos, who stand apart in the crowd. Priests."

The writing is too cute, the inferences New York nasty. Quindlen doesn't come right out and say, celibacy forever separates priests from the rest of humankind and therefore they cannot feel the pain they are causing ordinary sexual folks like gays and lesbians. That would be making a

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statement, mounting an argument that invites rebuttal. She'd rather we feel the paragraph's implicit, emotional logic. The technique is familiar. It's what Henry Luce's *Time* did routinely when the editors wanted to advance an ideology: disarm the reader by structuring the narrative around damning details that substitute for real argument.

For Anna in Quindlenland there are only two kinds of people: victims and oppressors. She speaks, she tells us, for "the powerless": the poor, homosexuals, African-Americans, the terminally ill, people with AIDS. And, of course, women. The list is hers, and though it is short by New York standards—it excludes most of the people who actually live and work there—it defines the limits of her prosaic, mired-in-the-sixties compassion. She bleeds easily, if selectively, like a stigmatist. The oppressors are mostly white males, especially the clergy of her own church, but the list extends to the Irish, the Italians, the Eastern Europeans—to any lower middle-class white or Hispanic group that reminds her of her own origins in a community (a white, mostly Catholic suburb of Philadelphia) whose religious and other values she now reviles.

As Karen Lehrman pointed out in the *New Republic* [June 10, 1991], Quindlen is patronizing toward those for whom she tries to speak and is emotionally incapable of writing honestly about men. As the *Times*'s resident tutor in emotional correctness, she also manages to trivialize important issues—chiefly by ignoring inconvenient facts.

For instance, in a column comparing Mike Tyson and Magic Johnson as heroes for black kids, Quindlen denounces the loutish boxer as a rapacious womanizer and praises the basketball star for pushing condoms now that he is HIV-positive. But she is conveniently silent about Johnson's own acknowledged womanizing. Similarly, in all her columns on candidate Bill Clinton, she mentions Gennifer Flowers only once, dismissing the affair as an "adultery brouhaha." Again, in her commentary on the New York Public School Board's uproar over multiculturalism and condom distribution, she never once mentions that it was the "ordinary people" in Queens and elsewhere who organized the grassroots campaign which ended in ousting Manhattan-supported schools chancellor Joseph Fernandez. And in all her fulminations against the Hibernians for not wanting gay and lesbian groups to march as such on Saint Paddy's day, she ignores the fact that ACT-UP first desecrated the Eucharist while disrupting a Mass at Saint Patrick's Cathedral, where the Hibernians have long functioned as putative protectors of the church. Predictably, Quindlen was immediately and wholly won over by Anita Hill during the Clarence Thomas hearings. But to read her, you would never know that a majority of women as well as men, according to polls published in her own newspaper, thought Thomas, not Hill, was telling the truth.

But of all the issues which Quindlen addresses, the one on which she is most piously dissembling is abortion. She has, she tells us, written more columns on this issue than on any other; a half dozen appear in this collection. "I have never sat down to write about abortion without feeling, at least for a moment, the complexities sweep over me like a fit of faintness," she confides. If that is so, she hides her ambivalence well—as any woman columnist must if she wants to write about abortion for the *New York Times*. Only one principle—abortion-on-demand—is tolerable (indeed, she is even opposed to parental consent for minors, lest it harm an adolescent's "dignity") though she never explains why she opts for this absolutist position. Neither does she let on that a majority of Americans want choice restricted mostly to the "hard cases," that abortion has become Americans' preferred form of birth control after sterilization, or that most women who get abortions are repeaters. And never—no, never—does she mention that there are 1.6 million abortions a year.

Quindlen is especially fond of misrepresenting Kristin Luker's limited but important book, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, as saying that prolife men are really only trying to put their womenfolk back into the patriarchal home. Never does she report Luker's key finding that prochoice women are less religious

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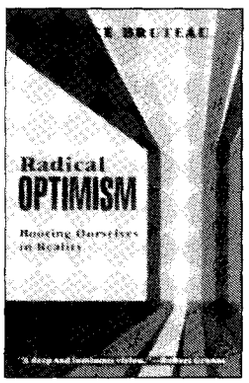

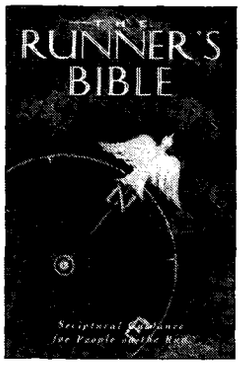

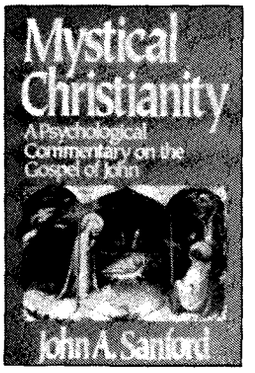

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than those who are prolife, or that the choicers regard abortion-on-demand as a necessary supply-side component in their career-minded "life project." Indeed, that view seems central to Quindlen's own sense of self. She is, she tells us, the working mother of three "wanted" children, leaving the impression that only wanted children need be brought to term.

What emerges from this book is a veiled portrait of a clever Catholic school girl who found Enlightenment at Barnard College in the early seventies and never looked back, except in anger. She recalls a church "so often devoted to conformity and crowds" but the sum of her knowledge of things Catholic seems to have been arrested at the age of seventeen. Indeed, if Anna Quindlen didn't exist, Mary Gordon would have invented her. □

THERE'LL ALWAYS BE A FIREPLACE

THE USE OF MEMORY
Tom Burns
Sheed and Ward (London), available in the U.S. from Christian Classics, $28.95, 202 pp.

Gerald O'Collins

Tom Burns, the London *Tablet*'s former long-time editor, remains forever etched in my memory standing in front of fireplaces. The fire was not lit in August 1978 when we met with some friends in his London apartment to discuss possible successors to Pope Paul VI. Tom stood there looking around the circle as we named our choices for the impending papal conclave and swept aside his enlightened guess: Albino Luciani.

If my memory rightly recalls our first meeting, it took place years before that in my parents' home outside Melbourne. Tom was enjoying the light and warmth of our huge, country fireplace—a break on a working tour of Australia. That was just one of his many networking visits abroad: to the United States, France, Italy, Spain, Chile, and many other countries.

After a long life as publisher and journalist, with a wartime interlude at the British embassy in Madrid, in his late eighties Tom has, as he said at its launching, "committed" his first book.

Despite the rancorous review by Evelyn Waugh's son Auberon (London *Sunday Telegraph* for March 21, 1993), this autobiography remains enthralling throughout. There are stories about those he met in the United States like Thomas Merton, Sargent Shriver, the Duke of Windsor, and Sheila (Cudahy) Pellegrini. An early stay in Paris put him in touch with Raissa and Jacques Maritain, Marc Chagall, and others. He was in Rome for the funeral of Pope Pius XI. In Spain he had to arrange for a seven-foot bed when entertaining Charles de Gaulle and his wife. The list of those whom Tom knew, entertained, and published in England never ends: Hilaire Belloc, John and Penelope Betjeman, G.K. Chesterton, Christopher Dawson, T.S. Eliot, Clare Boothe Luce, Frank Sheed, and Maisie Ward. The last of his generation, Tom's vignettes cover more than sixty years in the story of what he calls the "Catholic intelligentsia" of our century.

He tells of Herbert Thurston, S.J., that tireless debunker of bad history and bogus visions, being challenged by an impertinent young Jesuit: "Father, is it all right if I believe in the Trinity?" Don't miss Tom's story of his crossing the Pyrenees alone in imitation of Belloc, losing his way, being drafted into a Corpus Christi procession in a tiny mountain village, and then traveling with a troupe of bawdy performing dogs. Along the way he called a particular inn to bring greetings from Belloc. "Ah," said the innkeeper, "that charming *German* gentleman." Belloc, to whom, as Tom remarks, "the Franco-Prussian war was like a hair-shirt, would have exploded."

A networker all his life, Tom began publishing in 1926 at the "sweat-shop and university rolled into one," the newly founded firm of Sheed and Ward. Alongside such locals on their list as Belloc, Ronald Knox, Arnold Lunn, and Christopher Dawson, Tom helped to bring in translations from France and Germany. I remember his delight fifty years later as editor of the *Tablet* when I sent him a piece on the state of German Catholic theology: the article opened at the fresh grave in Tübingen of

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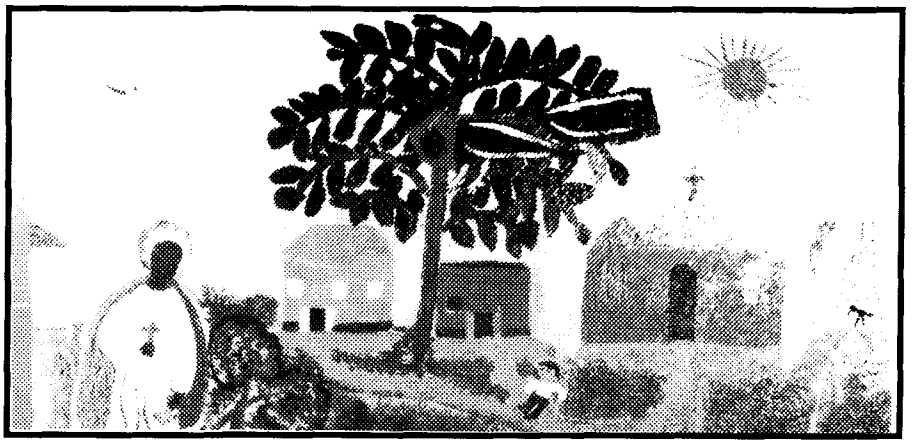
one of his old authors, Karl Adam.

From Sheed and Ward Tom moved across the street to Longman, Green & Co. He secured books from friends like Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene. He managed to persuade the "somewhat bovine board at Longmans" to underwrite Greene's trip to Mexico. The results were the *Lawless Roads* and perhaps Greene's best novel, *The Power and the Glory*. Much later Tom's persistence encouraged Greene to create *Monsignor Quixote* against all odds.

In the 1920s Tom lived for a while in Bloomsbury. After Paris he was not awed by the Bloomsbury intelligentsia: "Its religious requirements appeared to be satisfied by Frazer's *Golden Bough* and its sexual mores seemed to derive from the Trobriand Islanders." Many remarks and stories of this quality—don't skip over those about Paul Claudel and Evelyn Waugh—make nonsense of Auberon Waugh's gratuitous complaints about the book's lack of incidents and shortage of jokes.

When World War II ended and Tom returned to London from Madrid, he brought with him his wonderful Spanish wife (Mabél) and a growing family. He revitalized Burns & Oates, a publishing house founded by a great-uncle. Before he left in 1967 to become editor of the *Tablet*, Tom had helped to launch *Concilium* and had added more than a thousand titles to his firm's list. He delighted in reissuing classics by Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint John of the Cross, and other mystical giants. His interest in spirituality went back a long way. On his seventeenth birthday, three school friends gave him the two volumes of Baron von Hügel's *The Mystical Element in Religion*.

In his fifteen years running the *Tablet*, Tom liberalized the journal's policies and massively broadened its list of readers and contributors. The only piece I ever had rejected by Tom was on Jesus as martyr. I never meant it that way but Tom took it as undercutting the risen Christ's divinity. That faith, together with the Mass, is one of the great non-negotiables of Tom's existence. For so many of us Tom has revealed the warmth and light which come from Catholic Christianity—like the great fireplaces I always see Tom standing in front of. □



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Gerald Early, editor
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Don Wycliff

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Early, the very talented head of the department of African-American Studies at Saint Louis's Washington University, conceived the notion of asking about two dozen black intellectuals to commit to writing their thoughts on the psychological condition—some would say predicament—of blacks in America in this last decade of the century.

Much as a preacher might, Early gave them a text "as a kind of point of departure, something to get the brain cells working." The text was one of the most famous passages in African-American literature, from W.E.B. Du Bois's 1903 classic, *The Souls of Black Folk*. "After the Eygptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian," the passage goes,

> the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in this American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.
>
> The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self.

The results of Early's challenge are so varied that it is impossible to make any general statement about them.

The majority of the essayists felt that Du Bois was onto something and that his observations retained a certain validity even now. But several thought this whole "Du Boisian dualism" was so much buncombe, as likely as not the projection onto a whole people of one black man's own confusion, born of his upbringing and education among whites.

The best of the essays, the most thoughtful and mature, reflected a pedagogical concern. These were African-American scholars concerned with how best to raise and educate African-American children for happy, successful, spiritually wholesome lives in America.

The least of the essays, the whiny, immature ones, are concerned with political and ideological ax-grinding. Two of these stand out, sociologist Robert Stapes's "The Illusion of Racial Equality," and "Primal Orb Density" by Wanda Coleman, a poet. The latter includes this observation, presumably offered as evidence of some unfairness in American life:

> ...[I]f I want a job, I have to carry myself in a way which is nonthreatening or seen as safe by my white employer. The energy I exert in this barrier-bursting exhausts me. My opinions and values must be suppressed. The only place I experience liberty is on the page (within limits of what's salable imposed by the white publishing establishment). I cannot afford to do otherwise in the course of daily commerce without dooming my primary self.

These are not the thoughts of an adult, but of a college sophomore, circa 1969. And race is the least of such a person's problems.

Fortunately, such foolishness is far less abundant than the wisdom of thinker-writers like Stanley Crouch, Reginald McKnight, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Ella Pearson Mitchell, C. Eric Lincoln, and, not least, Gerald Early himself. But the essay that most impressed me—for its plain common sense, its philosophical highmindedness, its Catholic autobiographical details, its pedagogical responsibility—was that of Wilson J. Moses, professor of English and history at Penn State.

"It is true enough," Moses writes at the start of his essay (sensibly and honestly titled "Ambivalent Maybe"), "that my feelings as a black man have sometimes been in conflict with my sense of American nationality. But over the years I have become resigned to the fact that my interests, so far in this life, have always been inseparable from those of the United States." I suspect that that describes the feelings of most African-Americans, including many of those who call the greatest attention to their anguish with the state of things for black people in the United States.

But Moses's best lines follow the ones mentioned above. He writes: "I am restless and vulnerable, here at home. But in Europe or in Africa I have never felt any less vulnerable or alienated. Much of this certainly has to do with being black, but a portion of it simply derives from the human predicament. We must all feel lost and lonely and threatened by inevitable doom. Every age in the history of mankind has been an age of anxiety." It takes courage for an African-American to say that. It especially takes courage for one who hopes to be taken seriously among his own people.

But Moses isn't finished even after that. Toward the end of his essay, addressing the obligations of black intellectuals to black young people, he unearths a spendidly insightful quotation from the nineteenth-century black scholar Alexander Crummell: The "fashion of our life fills us with perplexities and breeds con-

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stant anxieties, but these are the heritage of all God's spiritual creatures...created for the unending, the everlasting ventures and anxieties of their spirits in the deep things of God."

The black intellectual's job, Moses says, is to "teach our young people the importance of this inner struggle." Moses, Gerald Early, and all the contributors—even the weakest ones—have discharged part of that responsibility with this important volume. □

ENIGMA ON THE TIBER

PAUL VI
The First Modern Pope
Peter Hebblethwaite
Paulist Press, $29.95, 752 pp.

Raymond A. Schroth

One of my earliest childhood memories is of hearing the radio report of the white smoke over the Vatican announcing the 1939 election of Pope Pius XII. As Franklin D. Roosevelt defined in our imaginations what a president was and should be, Eugenio Pacelli—mysterious, skinny, austere, autocratic, churning out decrees and instant elocutions on everything from euthanasia to the art of the Harlem Globetrotters, and reportedly blessed with heavenly visions on his deathbed—determined our image of a pope. For those of us who read the religion pages of *Time* in the 1950s, the future of the church hung on which of Pacelli's protégé monsignors—"conservative" Tardini or "liberal" Montini—was close to the throne, and the papal succession.

There's a story, told to me by Toronto University philosopher James M. Cameron, of Pope Paul VI and the great Dominican theologian Yves Congar. They were having dinner together and Paul asked Congar, "What's going to happen when we both die?" This evokes the time, on the eve of and during the Vatican Council, when the best of Christendom was embodied in the work of French philosophers, theologians, and novelists like Maritain, deLubac, Daniélou, and Mauriac. French spirituality, liturgy, and bold experiments like the worker-priests sought to bridge the gap between the faith and the secular world.

Then, from 1958 to 1963, Pope John XXIII—we remember the old photo of Roncalli with a cigarette in one hand and a martini in the other—reshuffled the Vatican deck and summoned Vatican II, with only a fuzzy idea of what it should do. After recalling Giovanni Battista Montini from his "exile" as archbishop of Milan, Pope John obligingly died, so that Montini could assume the role for which it seems every moment of his life had been a preparation.

Some, like Cameron, consider Paul VI a great man. Montini was an intellectual who saw so many sides of a complex issue that he appeared to be a "Hamlet," but one who might, because of his intelligence, sensitivity, and profound spirituality—including his willingness to suffer—lead the church from the world in which he and Congar were indispensable to the world in which they were willing to be forgotten.

Others remember Paul VI through the image of the ultimate ineffectual cleric, with his small, thin frame, his balding, tilted head, and big weepy eyes, his lamentations over the "betrayals" of departing priests, but most of all as the promulgator of *Humanae vitae*, the encyclical which proved that the supreme teacher could not listen to the church he would teach.

Peter Hebblethwaite, the British, former-Jesuit, Rome correspondent for *National Catholic Reporter* and the London *Tablet*, tries to reconcile these images. In this massive, well-documented, sympathetic biography Hebblethwaite strives to give us Montini whole: the man, his church, and

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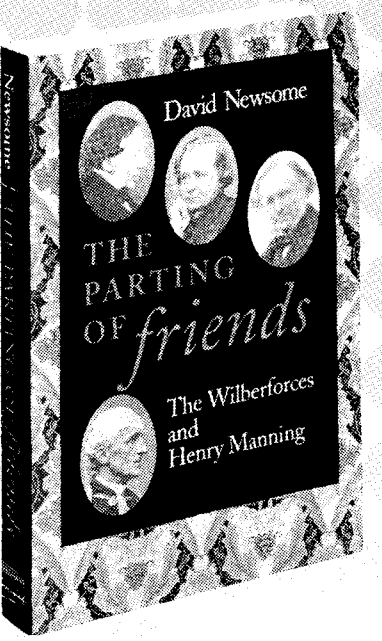
—MARK NOLL



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—JOSEF ALTHOLZ
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his times. But how do you write the life of a pope when, as the office has evolved, the real life of a pope is more secret that that of the queen of England? As a young priest, Battista, as he was called, wrote many letters home; and in later years spoke annually but guardedly with philosopher-friend Jean Guitton. The proceedings of Vatican II are well documented, and journalist2-historian Hebblethwaite has good access to Roman gossip. Yet Paul remains an enigma.

Here is an odd portrait of a "modern" man who, from childhood, by wealth, piety, and sickness, was sheltered from the experiences—like war, student life, romantic love, and work—that forge the character of a generation. But this is also the pope who guided Vatican II to completion—finally, in the fourth session, calling for the vote on religious liberty; who promised theologians real intellectual freedom; who allowed (with some foot-dragging) the principle of collegiality to take hold; who, following John XXIII's initiative, fostered ecumenism; who broke out of the Vatican to visit orphanages rather than maharajah's palaces in Bombay and to cry "*Jamais plus la guerre*" at the United Nations; whose 1968 secret diplomacy brought the U.S. and North Vietnam together in Paris; who, although he closed the door on women priests, tried toward the end to educate himself on women's issues; and who, in spite of his apparently cold demeanor, overwhelmed visitors with his warmth and friends with his love.

When Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci interviewed Brazil's Dom Helder Camara in 1970 about his Marxist ideas, she asked, in mock shock, "But does Paul VI know you say these things?" "He knows," Helder replied. "And he doesn't disapprove. It's just that he can't speak the way I do. He has certain people around him, poor man!"

Poor man. There was always something about Montini—who, because he was a sickly child, never expected a long life—that evoked pity. In some ways possessed of the most absolute authority on earth, he was still perceived—because he so perceived himself—as a victim, a prisoner of a curia, cardinals, a subculture, that had made him but could turn on him at any time.

As a young priest rising through the bureaucracy, he wrote himself pious prayer-notes imploring God for the humblest posts; when he accepted the papacy he referred to it as his crucifixion. Yet all his life his manner—his caution, his "diplomacy," if not calculated ambition—moved him toward the papacy. Even his two "setbacks"—he was fired from his student chaplaincy because rivals saw him as too liberal, and, after thirty-four years in Rome, shipped off to be bishop of Milan without a red hat because a curia rival mistakenly saw him as pro-worker-priests—eventually moved him higher.

But as Cardinal Leon-Joseph Suenens observed, Paul's greatest weakness was that he imagined there could be a diplomatic solution to every problem. So he swung between great visionary moves, like his trip to Jerusalem, and weird gestures—like his pilgrimage to the questionable shrine at Fatima; giving his jeweled tiara "to the poor," only to have it sold on the open market by Cardinal Francis Spellman; and declaring Mary "Mother of the Church" against the advice of theologians.

The process which led to the publication of *Humanae vitae* had begun in 1963 when Pope John, at the request of Cardinal Suenens, established the Birth Control Commission to balance off the draft text of a very conservative proposed council document; and it heated up in 1965 when Paul VI's agents tried to insert a condemnation of contraception into *Gaudium et spes*, and again in 1966, when the commission concluded that the church's ban on artificial contraception was untenable.

Untrained as a moral theologian, the pope's most formative experience of human love was a teen-age male friendship. As the chaplain of the anti-Fascist Federation of Italian Catholic University Students (FUCI) from 1929 to 1933, he knew the love a mentor has for the young. Forty years before, he had written an eloquent letter on marriage to his brother Ludovico; but the question of contraception was a more technical question about the medical and moral effects of "the pill" which inhibited ovulation. And, more important, it was a debate about what was the effect on the mutual love of Catholic married couples when, because they could not at that time accept a pregnancy, they were not allowed to make love. Paul agonized for two years, and, without wide consultation, published the document which—tragically— will always be linked with his name.

Once in Rome a friend showed me the spot where in 1978 the Red Brigade had left the bullet-ridden corpse of the leader of the Christian Democratic Party, Aldo Moro in the trunk of a car. I remembered that the eighty-year-old Paul VI had poured out the last emotional juices of his life pleading publicly and privately for the life of his kidnapped friend. In a letter which Hebblethwaite says belongs in any anthology of twentieth-century Italian writing, Paul cried out from his own death bed, "On my knees, I beg you...leave me, the interpreter of the voices of so many of our fellow citizens, the hope that in your hearts feelings of humanity will triumph." Once again he had misjudged—overestimated—the human heart. The Moro tragedy was the "last twist in his crown of thorns." Three months later his own heart collapsed. I remember, but Hebblethwaite does not record, Paul's final humiliation: his corpse was poorly embalmed and did not bear well the August heat. □

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INDIA—ALL OF IT

A SUITABLE BOY
Vikram Seth
HarperCollins, $30, 1,376 pp.

Robert Worth

Vikram Seth has become something of a literary hero in recent months, both in his native India and in England. Newspapers have touted the million-pound advance he received for his monumental novel, set in early 1950s' India, and his publishers have trumpeted comparisons with Dickens, George Eliot, and Tolstoy. Seth is one of several brilliant and increasingly visible young Indian writers, and his aspirations match the recent trend (espoused by Tom Wolfe, among others) toward lengthy and ambitious "social" novels in the model of the nineteenth-century masters. Seth appears, in other words, to be riding a wave of expectation for something like a Great Indian Novel. The renewed outbreaks of religious and ethnic violence in India over the last few months make his *magnum opus*, which describes remarkably similar episodes in the years just after independence, all the more timely. Nor will this novel provoke any *fatwas*. Seth's grand (perhaps too grand) ambition has been to fit all of India into a novel without offending anybody.

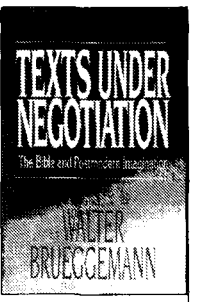
On the surface, *A Suitable Boy* describes the lives of four large, extended Indian families linked by marriage and friendship. One of those families, the Khans, belong to the *zamindari* aristocracy, whose feudal privileges were being swept away by land reforms at the time of the novel's setting. Another family, the Brahmin Chatterjis, contains the first Indian High Court justice; the third is fathered by a powerful minister of revenue who is also a member of the national Legislative Assembly. The fourth family, lacking such obvious distinctions, nonetheless contains one of the first Indian executives (a "brown Sahib") in a high-profile British management firm. Seth grounds his fiction, in other words, in some of the most important political and social issues of the day. Nehru himself becomes a character (albeit a minor one) and lengthy speeches from the Legislative Assembly are quoted *verbatim*.

Nonetheless, Seth's novel is far less concerned with political struggles than with the smaller dramas of everyday life. The story is set, after all, not during the struggle for independence but afterwards, during a period of relative peace and stability. There are crises, for the four families of *A Suitable Boy*, but none of them explodes into melodrama. An adulterous affair threatens chaos, but then fizzles out peacefully; a heartbroken young man considers suicide, but ends up spending a month in the country instead. Seth appears to be bent on showing us the interstices of social change, the way that life and love will go on no matter what history may be up to. It is hardly surprising when Lata, the novel's central character, does indeed find a suitable boy to marry.

This emphasis on the redeeming aspects of private life is in keeping with Seth's prior work. His first novel, *The Golden Gate*, described the joys and sorrows of three twenty-something characters in San Francisco. Far more limited in scope than *A Suitable Boy*, it was nevertheless an ambitious book: the prospect, Seth tells us, of a novel composed of sequential sonnets was enough to send both editors and friends away in disgust. But the critics raved; Gore Vidal promptly dubbed it "the great Californian novel." Seth's verbal gift was supple enough to capture even the most fragmentary conversations, and to range in tone from charming doggerel at the outset to redemptive tragedy in the novel's final pages.

In *A Suitable Boy* Seth appears to have bitten off more than he can chew. His plot, weaving back and forth toward India's first

Walter Brueggemann



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general election, insists on taking a glimpse of almost every issue that might conceivably have a bearing on that event: religion, law, business, changing cultural traditions. Even the drudgeries of life in a remote northern village are given their fullest possible expression. But the farther Seth roams from his central, high-caste characters, the more his prose tends to sound like a museum-tour: dry, passionless, and analytical.

To some extent these failings are the result of Seth's desire to be fair, to offer a balanced portrait of the nation that will respect all the parties involved. He could not be more different, in this respect, from Salman Rushdie, whose 1980 novel *Midnight's Children* also takes postindependence India as its subject, and Indian family life as its vehicle. *Midnight's Children* shuttles wildly back and forth in time, presenting a feverish, supernatural vision of Indian life and society. The narrator, who was born at the very second of independence, literally *becomes* the voice of modern India; he has none of the calm detachment that marks Seth's novel. He is cursed, wounded, and finally castrated by the forces that were set in motion at his birth, and the magical realism of his narration represents a desperate effort to make sense of those forces. That effort ends, with the novel, in a terrifying vision of apocalypse. The book makes no effort, in other words, to build bridges or to present a "balanced" view. Its very form would appear to mock that possibility in a country so torn by extremism and hatred. Rushdie leaves us, in the end, with nothing more than a painfully vivid impression.

If *A Suitable Boy* fails to achieve such vividness, that is probably because Seth is after different quarry. A former doctoral student in economics who abandoned demography for literature, Seth treats his characters with a gentle concern, and is unwilling to sacrifice them (or their future) to blazing language or dramatic conclusions. *A Suitable Boy* makes no effort to shock its readers, or even to dazzle them. It aims instead at a vast, comprehensive unity; and it focuses on those aspects of life that hold society together rather than those that tear it apart. In that sense Seth seems to have moved self-consciously beyond the jarring, fragmentary aesthetics of most "postmodern" fiction. All the same, it's hard to get through *A Suitable Boy* without wishing for more action, a faster pace, and a stronger story. Moderation and fairness are necessary virtues in India's current crisis; but they are not of much value in a novel. □

HOTBED OF SECULAR HUMANISM

ROME REBORN
The Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture
Edited by Anthony Grafton
Library of Congress and Yale University Press, $55, 323 pp.

Robert L. Spaeth

Credit for founding the Vatican Library belongs to two Renaissance popes, Nicholas V (1447-55) and Sixtus IV (1471-84). Pope Nicholas had the idea of a public library in the Vatican and contributed some one thousand Greek and Latin codices; he intended the library "for the common convenience of the learned." Pope Sixtus added space, embellishments, organization, and many more manuscripts.

Today the Vatican Library can only be called fabulous. It owns almost 2 million books, 75,000 manuscripts—the oldest from the second century A.D.—prints, maps, engravings, coins, etc., etc. Anthony Grafton, a Princeton University historian, says it "remains the richest collection of Western manuscripts and printed books in the world." And already "in its High Renaissance heyday, the library afforded the most advanced facilities in Europe for scholarly work."

Since the 1920s, the Vatican Library has cultivated a productive relationship with the Library of Congress, the latter providing badly needed technical assistance for cataloguing, classification, and the like. Earlier this year, the Vatican Library, in gratitude to its American benefactors, sent a sample of its valuable manuscripts to the Library of Congress for a public exhibition. These intellectual and artistic treasures are simply stunning.

Rome Reborn presents 216 photographic plates of Vatican Library items, breathtaking in their scope of subject matter, all of utmost historical importance, most of striking visual beauty. It is impossible to mention more than a few here; it would seem a reviewer's main task is to urge readers to look at the book itself since seeing will be believing.

Here is a page from a ninth-century parchment of Euclid's *Elements* in Greek. There, from the inside cover of a Latin codex, is a fifthteenth-century portrait of the Duke of Urbino holding a book—perhaps by the Roman historian Livy—and conversing with the artist, Christoforo Landino. Here is a richly illustrated page from a sixteenth-century codex of Franco-Flemish polyphonic music. And there is a map of China drawn by the seventeenth-century Polish missionary Michael Boym.

As arranged in this large volume, the Vatican Library manuscripts cover the spectrum from archaeology, Egyptology,

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mathematics, astronomy, geography, botany, and medicine to music, the Eastern churches, and East Asia. Sometimes it seems that every turn of a page will reveal a yet more fascinating item. Pirro Ligorio's 1773 detailed drawing of ancient Rome, which graces the book's dust jacket, gives a hint of what lies inside.

If this volume contained only the exquisitely printed plates, it would make the year's best coffee-table book. But it also contains eight informative, at times elegant, essays that put the manuscripts, maps, etc., into their historical contexts. The authors, all but one American scholars, display both precise erudition and attractive, readable prose. These essays make this coffee-table book an exception in the genre—a combination of the highest standards of writing, printing, and artistic illustrating, a combination that blends like the ingredients of Italian cuisine.

N.M. Swerdlow, a University of Chicago historian of astronomy, draws together the strands of a huge tapesty, the "exact sciences of antiquity: mathematics, astronomy, geography." Here, amid manuscripts of Euclid, Archimedes, Apollonius, Pappus, Ptolemy, and others, we learn—and see—the roots of modern physical science. By the late fifteenth century, Swerdlow writes, "clearly a whole new command of the mathematical sciences has been reached," accompanied by an "acceleration of progress in their recovery." How profoundly sad that the progress preserved in the Vatican Library was unjustly halted—though only temporarily—by the Galileo debacle of the early seventeenth century.

In "Paper Obelisks," Howard L. Goodman of Harvard University charts the incursions of Catholic missionaries, mainly Jesuit, into East Asia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The most famous of these was Matteo Ricci, an Italian Jesuit who went to China in the 1580s and never came back, dying in Peking in 1610. Ricci, a man of numerous talents, "influenced a whole generation of Jesuit missionaries," according to Goodman. A brilliant cartographer, Ricci published maps of Europe, Africa, and Asia, including his so-called *mappamundi*; we see here Ricci's map as printed ca. 1620 by his successor Guilio Aleni.

Among the most lavishly illustrated manuscripts are the musical ones. Richard Sherr of Smith College focuses on the papal choir, "a distinct institution within the curia" beginning in the fifteenth century. In the next century, the composer Palestrina was briefly a member. The Vatican Library acquired the papal choir's archives in 1871; they comprise "manuscripts and prints documenting the history of sacred music in the Vatican from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century." In this essay the types of music described and illustrated include chant, polyphony, Masses, and others. A particularly interesting engraving (1578) by Etienne Duperac shows in fine detail a papal ceremony in the Sistine Chapel.

The Vatican Library's holdings pay silent tribute to the humanism, with its deep appreciation of ancient cultures, of its two papal founders as well as that of many, though hardly all, succeeding popes. James Hankins, Harvard historian, comments in understatement: "The courtship between papal power and humanistic knowledge was not at first a smooth one." He might

have added that this long courtship—never quite a marriage—has had many additional rough spots. If Vatican policies had always exhibited the learning and humanism of its library, its worldly reputation would probably command more admiration today than it does. It would be an exaggeration to claim that the Vatican Library represents the Vatican at its best, but the Vatican Library certainly shows the way. □

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AUTONOMY, YES; COMMUNITY, YES

LIBERAL NATIONALISM
Yael Tamir
Princeton University Press, $24.95, 187 pp.

David McCabe

In contemporary political philosophy, the debate between liberalism and communitarianism frequently displays the kind of intellectual sophistication that characterized another famous feud—that between the Hatfields and the McCoys. On one side zealous communitarians castigate liberals for championing rampant individualism to the neglect of such values as loyalty to country and concern for the common good (i.e., liberalism as embodied in the comic-book ravings of Ayn Rand), while on the other die-hard liberals attack communitarians for suggesting that our identities are wholly determined by the communal structures within which we are born and for thereby endorsing a slavish allegiance to the roles which the collective prescribes for us (i.e., communitarianism as a paean to the happy days of feudal hierarchy).

In *Liberal Nationalism*, Yael Tamir, senior lecturer in philosophy at Tel Aviv University, tries to move the debate beyond the hysterics of such philosophical reductionism by building on the sensible ideals underlying both sides. (Tamir speaks of nationalism rather than communitarianism because she wants to show that recognizing the value of unique national and cultural communities need not result in the chauvinistic fervor of fascism or, to use a contemporary example, ethnic cleansing.) From liberalism she distills the values of autonomy, rational reflection, and choice; from communitarianism she seizes on the importance both of feeling connected to others through life in a community and of loyalty to particular cultural traditions which help give meaning to our lives.

Though these sets of ideas are often seen as being in tension with one another, Tamir points out that they are in fact complementary. After all, our choices are meaningful to us partly because they reflect values which already exist within our culture, while at the same time the distinct identities we carve for ourselves take on added importance because we see them as products of our own agency. But once we recognize that individual well-being requires both a measure of autonomy and a feeling of attachment to a cultural community (a nation, in Tamir's usage), it follows that along with protecting a wide range of personal liberties, the state should also act to ensure the survival of the various cultures to which its members feel committed. In short, concludes Tamir, the list of individual rights must be expanded to include the right to culture.

Having argued for the importance of communal bonds, Tamir then tries to show how this expanded vision of human needs leads to a conception of liberalism which is both more humane and more defensible than that offered by contemporary liberals. More humane, because it demands greater sensitivity to the needs of minority cultures; more defensible, because it explains why liberal states are under greater obligations to help their own citizens than to help outsiders—a position which seems a betrayal of liberalism's avowed commitment to universal and impartial moral principles. Tamir's justification for this position is not entirely convincing, I think, for she appears to assume that just because liberal states *feel* that they have special obligations to their own citizens, they therefore *in fact* have such special obligations, though there is no reason to suppose that the latter follows from the former. Nonetheless, it seems likely that a justification of the liberal state's partiality towards its own citizens, if possible at all, would have to proceed in a manner similar to that outlined by Tamir, and one hopes that her argument here will lead liberal states to reexamine their obligations to all citizens of the world, not just those within their borders.

More generally, readers of *Liberal Nationalism* will also find themselves asking just how much Tamir's argument adds to contemporary conceptions of liberalism. They will likely conclude, I think, that while Tamir is right in arguing that liberal states should pay greater attention to the importance of cultural identification and that those in the dominant culture need to be especially sensitive to minority cultures, the liberal nationalism she offers does not extend in significant ways the bedrock principle of contemporary liberalism, which asserts that the state should remain neutral as to the value of different ways of life and cultures.

Part of the reason that Tamir undervalues the liberal neutrality position, and thus overemphasizes its distance from her own conception of liberal nationalism, is that her overall aim is to infuse the political realm (liberalism) with ideals from the communal realm (nationalism). This assumes, of course, that the political ideals at the core of liberalism are somehow insensitive, or positively hostile, to the values of community. But it is fairer to say, I think, that state neutrality is designed to secure precisely those liberties (e.g., freedom of worship, of assembly, of expression) which are crucial to individuals pursuing distinct cultural identities within communities of their own choosing. By refusing to privilege one culture or way of life over another, the neutral state tries to ensure that citizens are free to define themselves in terms of those cultural communities to which they feel the greatest allegiance. For this reason, the neutral state may well offer the best environment for preserving the kind of cultural pluralism that Tamir cherishes.

In recognizing this truth about the liberalism of state neutrality, however, we see again the inadequacies of those political theories which rest on a simplistic opposition between the individual and the collective. The good life for human beings is marked both by reflective autonomy and by a belief that one is connected to a meaningful community, and no political philosophy that neglects either of these ideals deserves to be taken seriously. The chief merit of Tamir's book is that

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it goes some way toward demonstrating what a political philosophy incorporating both of these ideals will look like. If, in the final analysis, the position she endorses looks a lot like contemporary liberalism chastened to pay greater attention to the value of community, this similarity should be taken not as a sign that Tamir's proposal is insignificant, but rather as an indication of the continuing relevance of liberal principles to the important social questions of our time. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

serio-comic "Searching for the Soap," I did both. In my squadron at Keesler Field, playing "drop the soap" was only an occasional crude joke—it was unthinkable that anyone would ever do it. But yes, we did exercise "custody of the eyes"—that is, if we spoke to anyone in the shower, it was with eye-to-eye contact. We just considered it good manners.

What Carlin's comedy seems to have missed is the matter of socialization. In the Israeli kibbutz, boys and girls are raised to adulthood showering together—under appropriate supervision, of course—and it seems to present no real problems. Gay males in this country have encountered similar socialization in their use of communal shower facilities at the gym and the beach, so I have a difficult time understanding why the military considers its problems unique.

The crying part of Carlin's article has to do with his zero sum game of social supports for stable heterosexual marriages with children. Most of the gays I know would also grieve at Carlin's litany of the factors that are hastening the destruction of the American family. I dare say that gays have suffered along with everyone else from the results of family decline; like everyone else, they are birthed and reared in families.

But for the life of me I can't figure out how continued persecution of gays will serve to rectify the damage done by deadbeat dads or illegitimacy—damage inflicted, I thought, by heterosexuals.

Let me go out on the limb a little further and suggest that gays would gladly accept any reduction of social perks that Carlin would impose on a "child-free" homosexual marriage. Tell me, David, would this be carrying fair play too far?

MAX COUCHMAN

Carlin on gays: III

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: David R. Carlin, Jr., seems to think that the past twenty-five years have been disastrous to the institution of marriage and the family, and that no-fault divorce laws, high divorce rates, widespread acceptance of premarital sex, etc., are the causes of the relative delegitimization of marriage and the family.

I would suggest that these are effects rather than causes. What has been more disastrous to the family is the social and economic reality of moving people all over the country for the convenience of the company, the disappearance of the extended family's role in the child-rearing process, laws which make it economically advantageous to maintain abusive marriages, the sexism that has kept women unrecognized in the home and unfairly paid on the job, while leading males to avoid their domestic responsibilities and to treat women as sex objects. These and other practices and attitudes have destroyed and delegitimized marriage more than divorce laws. The irony is that these conditions have always existed in Western society, which values family, children, and women much less than production and consumption.

The gay alternative reflects the society without the protection that society offers to the straight alternative. There are many gay couples who have been together for twenty, thirty, forty, and fifty years. Since this doesn't fit the stereotype, very few people know about it. There are people who have had several long-term partners, and there are people who have new partners frequently, just as in straight society. Remove the social punishment from departing an unhappy marriage and I suspect that gays and straights would stay or split at about the same rate. Permanency and fidelity have to be rooted in the relationship, in mutual commitment supported by a loving community. As gay and lesbian couples support each other and get support from the wider community, there is

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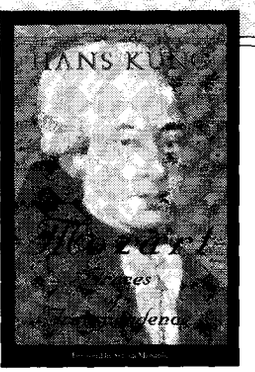

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greater willingness and capacity to work things out.

Granting legitimacy to several forms of human relationships will strengthen marriage by making it a freely chosen alternative among many. We seem to forget that many of today's marriages are people who "had to get married" many years ago. The problems of today are the same as those of yesterday. We have simply chosen different ways of dealing with them. Silence, secrecy, shame were the past solutions. Openness for individuals and groups to consider different possibilities, searching for alternatives, embracing the chosen alternatives seem to be the more appropriate solutions for today. We seem to be moving closer to giving a name to the real problems. In doing so we will be able to see real alternatives instead of shibboleths. Real alternatives do not have to be protected.

As for gays in the military, they have always been there and will always be there, in the closet or out. The question is how we are going to deal with this. Are we going to choose yesterday's solutions or today's? BILL McDONALD

The writer replies:

It is difficult to respond specifically to the vague effusions of Messrs. Couchman and McDonald, but perhaps a few general observations may serve as a reply.

I have no strong feelings one way or another about gays in the military. My complaint has to do with the tendency of the cultural Left to allege that all objections to gays in the military arise from nothing better than bigotry. The issue is far more complex than that, and those who pretend not to know this are being intellectually dishonest.

Also in the category of the intellectually dishonest are those who pretend not to know that the sexual liberation movement of the last twenty-five years—including the gay rights movement—has tended to delegitimize the married two-parent family. At this late date, who can fail to understand this?

Still further intellectual dishonesty is to be found among those who are righteously indignant at America's failure to give its full stamp of approval to homosexuality, yet who have not a tear to shed for the tens of millions of children whose lives have been blighted by the erosion of the married two-parent family. What cockeyed priorities!

Increasingly the cultural Left reminds me of those Aristotelian astronomers who refused to look at Jupiter's moons through Galileo's telescope. Why damage a beautiful theory with consideration of unpleasant facts? DAVID R. CARLIN, JR.

Mixed up on ministry

East Lansing, Mich.

To the Editors: In the March 12 issue I first read Robert Imbelli's review of John Collins's *Are All Christians Ministers?* and then Jane Redmont's review of Mary Jo Weaver's *Springs of Water in a Dry Land*. The two reviews grapple with two ends of a single divisive and defining issue for Catholic theology and practice: How we understand ministry in the church and how can one be reconciled to the persistent patriarchy of its structures. One can't but be thrilled by the simplicity and honesty of Redmont's analysis: "Many Catholic women today...stay on their own terms, *claiming the center* rather than assenting to a definition of their position as 'marginal.'" [Emphasis added.]

In describing the ministry of lay men and women we are too easily reconciled to a bland "Catholic Action" model. It served well during the early twentieth century but it doesn't sufficiently value the universal vocation of Christians. It seems to survive largely because it doesn't threaten patriarchal structures or the restriction of the sacramental ministry to celibate men. Collins's book seems to provide a scholarly basis for rejecting this cheapened version of lay ministry. The question is, what can be put in its place?

Coincidentally, a recent [March 19] issue of *National Catholic Reporter*, with eyes on the various sexual scandals of clergy which have made the news lately, sets forth an impassioned plea to posit again the basic questions that govern our church praxis in these matters. There is much interrelated material here: orders, jurisdiction, ministry, sacramentality, celibacy, to name only the most obvious.

In an organization, when things go seriously awry, one first suspects bad management, poor performance, or bad intentions on the part of those responsible. But I am convinced that by and large the church, from the pope on down, is blessed with better-than-average people. They try their best, are well-intentioned, work hard, are generally well trained and competent. So why are the wheels falling off? Must we not conclude that something is really wrong systemically? Could it be that we've got it wrong somewhere where it really matters, so that the whole engine chugs along with a noisy and jarring dysfunctionality?

It would be the height of hubris to suggest that the following remarks will make it all right. But one must look for the dysfunction where one hears the loudest squeaks or observes the greatest *dis*-ease. This would lead one to question why we have identified the sacramental ministries with the clerical celibate state and have invested all ministry (and ecclesiastical jurisdictional power) within this model.

It is important to be clear about this. *Even in the Latin rite*, and especially in all of the Eastern rites, there has never been, nor is there now, a universal practice requiring that the priesthood be limited to celibate men. We have many married priests today in good standing. So why does it seem to be so important for the Latin church to limit its recruitment of new priests to the celibate? Why this dysfunctionality?

Possibly because we must first recover the true purpose and meaning of celibacy. I believe that this can be found not as an adjunct to ordination and ministry, nor as a superior vocation or calling, but as part of the personal detachment necessary to the prophet, the witness, and the martyr (understood in its base meaning of giving cogent witness to God). It provides the personal freedom which unburdens the exceptional Christian who is called to high levels of personal commitment generally pursued in communities of like-minded and similarly dedicated people. I believe that a case can even be made historically for this model in the earliest monastic movements. Later on, monastic vows were conveniently at hand, but inappropriately applied, to reform conditions specific to the medieval ecclesiastical world, not the least of which was avoiding the partition of church properties among the offspring

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of benefice holders who were clerics. Thus celibacy and ordination became linked for reasons based neither on theology nor on spirituality—but as a means of governance.

If celibacy and the sacramental ministry were separated, the other dysfunctionalities would be addressed more easily. It would no longer be necessary to conceptualize the ministry of lay men and women at the margins, for married people would readily be entering the ranks of the ordained, thus making this distinction largely meaningless. Thereupon church structures would no longer seem so dauntingly patriarchal, for women would be welcomed to positions of authority (even if one were reluctant to envision women as priests, the way would be clear to admit them to positions of jurisdiction).

These visions seem right and just, and also theologically sound. Thus it is right and just for women to "claim the center"; because things are squeaking so badly, it is also urgent. Meanwhile, after the debris is cleared away, the true vocation of the celibate as prophet and martyr could emerge once again. This too is an urgent need.

ROBERT MARECK

God on campus

Ames, Iowa

To the Editors: Bravo for Michael Hunt's article on freshman college students ["All Is Not Lost," April 9]. At least here in Iowa the latest arrivals in academe are not the secularized, emotionally needy, immature adolescents decried by so many, even by other campus ministers. In our work at a state university where science and engineering reign, we find a hunger for God among students, a hunger that only the fundamentalists and some in the Catholic church seem to notice and try to feed.

We've also found that teaching the gospel and offering liturgies where the presence of God is evoked are more important than adopting the latest liturgical or pseudo-liturgical creative fad to titillate student interest. A sermon by the young assistant pastor on sexuality, which reaffirmed the positives of Catholic morality, provoked some of the most thoughtful responses from students. (It is alleged that one couple who were living together decided to move apart as a result of that sermon.)

Many of the students are weak in their understanding of their Catholic faith, possibly as a result of the psychologization of religious education. But they hunger for the Bible, some even seeking answers in the Scripture studies offered by evangelical groups on campus.

We've also found many willing to serve the very poor; they've flocked to cooking at the local shelter, though they often fail to understand the relation of poverty and injustice.

The church needs to take these young adults seriously, as does Fr. Hunt. Thanks for publishing his article.

JOHN DONAGHY

The writer is lay campus minister at the Catholic Student Center at Iowa State University.

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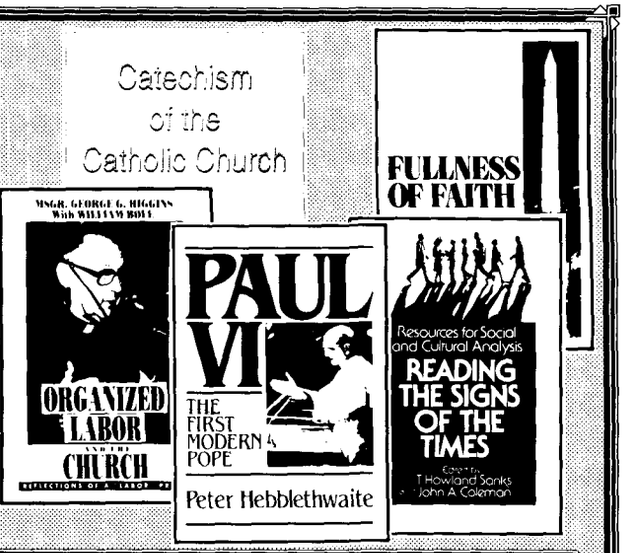
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